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FRANK MERRYWEATHER.

A NOVEL.

BY HENRY G. AINSLIE YOUNG ESQ.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

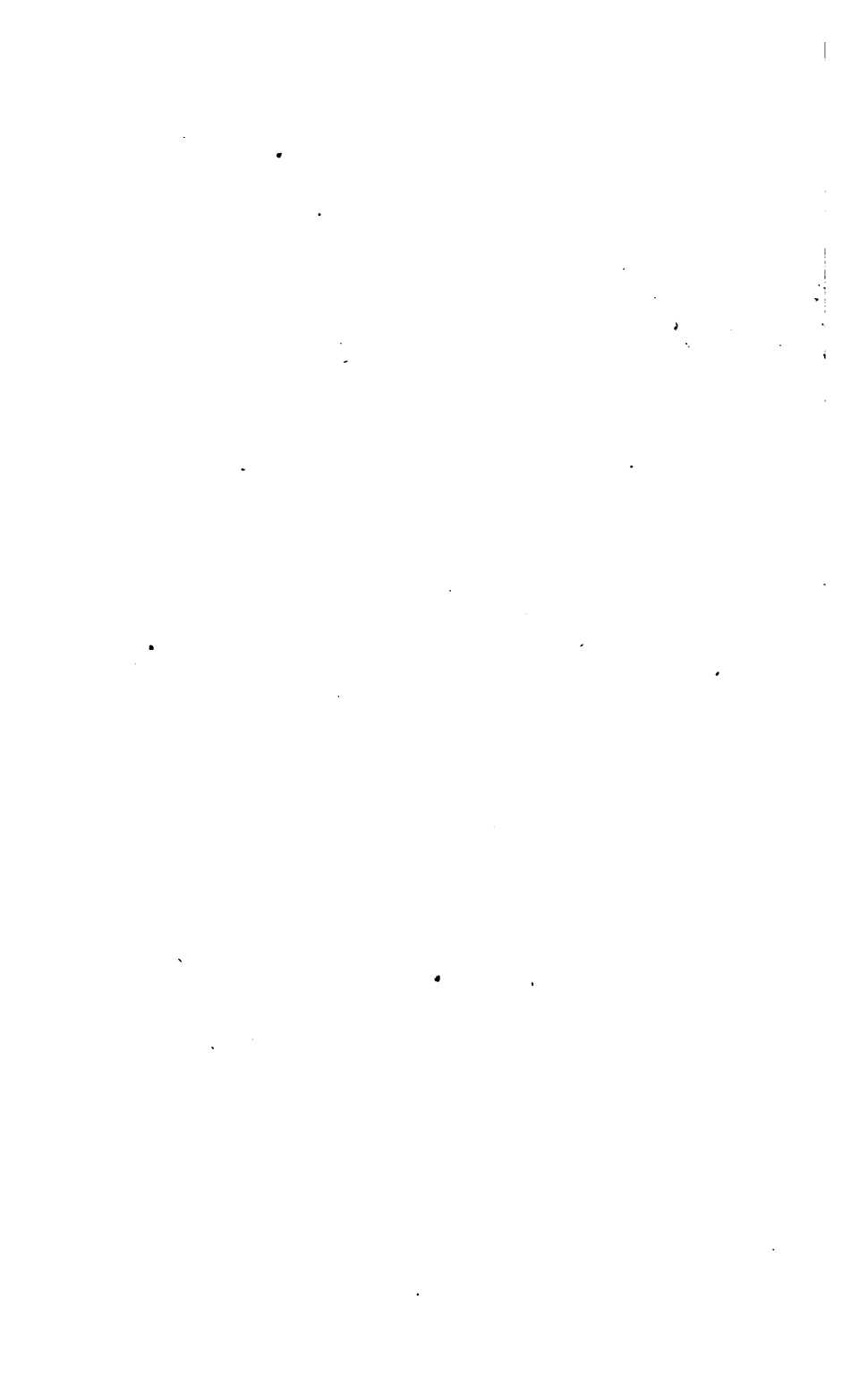


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FRANK MERRYWEATHER.

CHAPTER I.

He hath an Argosy bound to Tripolis,
another to the Indies ; I understand moreover
upon the Rialto, he hath a third at Mexico,
a fourth for England,—and other ventures he
hath.

Merchant of Venice.

FEW events can be more galling to
man's pride, or more calculated to wound
his self-love, than the discovery that he

has formed a false estimate of his own abilities. The associations by which he has been surrounded may have led him to suppose that the position he enjoys is due exclusively to his own energy and talents, or is the result of his superiority in some particular attribute over those amongst whom he has been thrown. From the success of his plans in one instance, he may have drawn the erroneous conclusion that his capacity is of an order to qualify him for the accomplishment of any task, however difficult, that will conduce to his interest, or gratify his ambition. In prosperity the not unwilling ear drinks in the flattering assurances of parasites who, while they excite the contempt of their dupe, insensibly acquire by their importunity an ascendancy over his better judgment, and in despite of his original doubt and mistrust, eventually succeed in instilling their poison into his mind.

But from whatever cause may have sprung the exaggerated notions of his own perfections, when some rough lesson of the world convinces him that his level is amongst those whom he had lately despised, and looked upon as creatures of an inferior mould,—when he is taught that he is not what he fondly supposed himself to be, and that all the projects he had formed for his own personal aggrandisement are chimerical, the disappointment, the most bitter that can occur, the disappointment of himself *by himself*, is susceptible of no alleviation. He would bear with less chagrin the loss of fortune than so deadly a blow to his vanity.

Mr. Munroe had been for years in India, where by steady perseverance and the exercise of talents, which though not resplendent were considerably above mediocrity, he had raised himself to a high position in the mercantile world. His firm, which had been considered one

of the best and richest in the East, acquired its celebrity solely through his good management, and how entirely dependent it was upon him for the proper conduct of its affairs, was manifested by his being instantly recalled to resume the reins, when, upon one occasion, he had resigned them for the purpose of spending a short time in the hills. On his return he found the house had suffered an immense loss, through the failure of a speculation rashly entered into during his absence, and that his partners were on the brink of ruin. His first step towards stopping the mischief that had occurred was to allay the panic occasioned by a report of the loss that had been sustained, and which, large as it was, had, as usual in such cases, been greatly exaggerated. This he accomplished with the most consummate skill, and his judicious arrangements and indefatigable exertions, in a short time restored the affairs of the house to their former prosperous state.

Two or three years had elapsed since this event when, his wealth having greatly increased, he found himself enabled to retire from business with a princely fortune, and after a residence of thirty years in India, he determined to seek in England a wider field for the exercise of his talents. A seat in the House of Commons, and even his ultimate elevation to the peerage, as the result of a successful parliamentary career, loomed indistinctly in the distance amongst the visions of future ambition which his past success conjured up. Nor did the experience which he had gained in India, nor his undoubted natural talents, suggest to him all that was unreal in these expectations.

An able historian truly tells us that the man, who, having left England when a boy, returns to it after thirty or forty years spent in India, will find, be his talents what they may, that he has much both to learn and unlearn before he can take his place amongst English states-

men. Of the truth of this remark, even when applied to those civil servants, who, with so much ability, govern our vast empire in the East, Mr. Munroe was profoundly ignorant, and the idea of being personally disqualified to discharge the ordinary duties of the new position to which he aspired, never entered his imagination. When, however, he changed the scene from the limited society of India, with its contracted views, to strive in England amongst the thronged avenues to distinction, he was destined quickly to discover the egregious folly of these expectations. There was a field here, doubtless, but a field in which he had as much chance of success as Gulliver would have had in a trial of physical strength against a host of Brobdignags; and, indeed, could Mr. Munroe have been transported, after a long residence in Lilliput, into the country where this fabulous race was supposed to dwell, his surprise at the

relative proportions of the inhabitants, could not have been greater, than that which he was about to feel at his own manifest inferiority to the men he had supposed it would prove an easy task to influence and direct.

Happily for the security of our empire and the welfare of the millions whom we govern in India ; the modern adventurer can no longer hope to follow in the footsteps of a Clive or a Warren Hastings. A regular gradation in the civil and military services of the company, and a despotic, but in general a mild and just administration of the government, have long since succeeded the disregard of individual rights, and the anarchy which marked our first establishment on that continent. A faint, perhaps a caricature resemblance, might however be traced between the class of English residents in India to which Mr. Munroe belonged, and the earlier and successful wanderers in the East. Mr. Munroe had never like

Warren Hastings triumphed over a Nuncomar, or made a chief justice his tool. He had never, like Clive, after the battle of Plassey, walked between heaps of gold, crowned with rubies and diamonds, and helped himself to two or three hundred thousand pounds; nor did he belong either to the civil or military service of the East India Company. His experience had been gained in the counting house. His authority had been exercised over submissive junior partners and obedient clerks. He daily walked between the ledgers displayed in his ample establishment, and his eye rested upon the rich deposit accounts which his name and credit attracted to his firm, with as complacent a glance as Clive could have bestowed on the spoil of Surajah Dowlah's treasury: but an unusual display of firmness was required from him, only when a doubtful speculation in indigo or opium, or the inexperience or rashness of those with whom

he was associated called for an unwonted exercise of these qualities. The result was nevertheless, in one respect, practically the same, for he returned to Europe with a fortune, which, even in the days of Clive and Warren Hastings, would have been considered not unworthy of a nabob.

Mr. Munroe was of humble origin, and his parents had with difficulty secured him the benefit of such an education as a day school in a remote English village could supply. As his wealth increased, he frequently came in contact with those in whose minds the seeds of early instruction had been carefully sown, and on these occasions he became transiently and vaguely sensible of some undefined disadvantage under which he laboured. His busy life as a merchant did not, however, afford him sufficient leisure to analyse this feeling with the accuracy which his natural activity would otherwise have

prompted him to bestow upon it, and his daily pursuits, crowned with the success which his mercantile skill and experience had rendered familiar to him, banished any permanent sense of inferiority.

The prevailing characteristic of his appearance was rigidity. A rigidity not confined to a countenance most strikingly expressive of this quality, but displayed in every movement of his inflexible person. His speech was slow and measured, every word being solemnly articulated, and his manner patronizing, though reserved and impressive. We say impressive, because he always impressed those with whom he conversed with the feeling, that could his manner have been changed into words, their purport would have been, "I am Mr. Munroe, the great merchant."

One trait in his character, however, stood forth in strong relief amid the harsh and even repulsive qualities of

which it was composed, like a struggling beam of sunshine over a stormy sea. He evinced a sincere affection for his wife, which although savouring of his peculiar disposition, nevertheless showed that naturally he was susceptible of other feelings than those which the daily strife for wealth engendered. He had married, some ten or twelve years before leaving India, the daughter of the commander in chief, then a graceful and accomplished girl of seventeen, who contrary to her own inclinations was persuaded into the marriage by her father, a man of good family but of limited means.

The connubial knot having been tied, however, Mrs. Munroe resolved, unpromising as the materials were, to make her home as cheerful as lay in her power. By womanly tact and a happy way she possessed of adapting herself to the diametrically opposite nature of her husband, she maintained

an influence over him, which, while it added to his happiness, preserved herself from sinking in his consideration to a secondary object in comparison with his pursuits, a result which would infallibly have taken place had she not possessed other attractions than her good looks and youthful figure. But the influence thus acquired was afterwards preserved by a more durable cement, for there gradually sprang up in this gentle nature a feeling of love, and under the influence of this feeling what excuses could she not make for his defects, what favourable constructions could she not put upon all his actions, when she knew herself to be the only object of any kindlier feelings that he possessed. It would be difficult to trace exactly the course by which she arrived at this result. It may have been from a sense of gratification in the first instance, that her husband, who was habitually so

reserved and distant, should relax to her alone—it may have been in admiration of that determined self reliance, which, while refusing all extrinsic aid, depended upon himself alone for the furtherance of his plans, or, she may have felt herself bound, from a sense of generosity, to return the insolated affection of a man so cut off from all the sympathies which render life worth preserving.

A year after their marriage Mrs. Munroe gave birth to a daughter, the only child they ever possessed, which became a source of great disappointment to him, as he had anxiously looked forward to having a son, who might inherit the means and position he had already acquired, and the still greater honours he hoped to obtain. It was a circumstance that would naturally rankle deep in the breast of a man whose prospects in the world had as yet met with an uninterrupted tide of success. His daughter

consequently found little favour in his eyes, and though perhaps he felt no positive dislike to her, yet there was a total absence of paternal feeling in his breast.

Such then were the feelings and views of Mr. Munroe, when he embarked for England. The wealthy merchant on his departure was not greeted with a salute. No show of military parade indicated that an officer high in the civil or military service of the company, was about to leave the presidency, but with the exception of this official display, few Governors General, on quitting our Eastern possessions, have received more numerous or well deserved marks of respect and attention, than those which attended his embarkation. The stately Indiaman anchored at several miles from the shore, awaited his arrival with her anchor "A peak," that as short a space of time as possible might elapse, between the arrival of the most important

passenger she was about to bear to Europe, and the moment of her departure. The side ropes were manned by the officers of the ship, and the Captain stood uncovered on the deck to welcome his distinguished guest. A suite of cabins had been previously engaged for Mrs. Munroe and his daughter, and the care with which they had been fitted up, and the obsequious bearing of the Ayahs who had been engaged to attend upon them, and of the Portuguese servants whose services had been secured for himself, all tended to keep alive the associations he had formed in India, and were in strict keeping with this, the last passage of Oriental life.

As soon as Mr. Munroe had been ushered into his cabin, the preparations for departure were rapidly completed. The Massulah boatmen returned to their own unwieldy machines, and the owners of the various Catamarans which

swarmed around the ship, reluctantly abandoned its good cheer to resume their amphibious existence. The anchor was then secured. The huge sails which had hung in folds from the spars, were sheeted home, and the salute which etiquette forbade on shore, boomed from the sides of the gallant vessel, as yielding to the land breeze she gracefully sped upon her homeward voyage, under the influence of a cloud of canvas.

CHAPTER II.

Hark, they whisper ; angels say,
Sister spirit, come away !
What is this absorbs me quite ?
Steals my senses, shuts my sight,
Drowns my spirit, draws my breath ?
Tell me, my soul, can this be death ?

Pope.

It was a bright day in the month of March, when the welcome sound of "land" was heard from the mast head, as the Indiaman with a favourable westerly wind proceeded up the English

Channel. Off the Isle of Wight the services of a pilot boat were easily secured, to convey Mr. Munroe and his family to Portsmouth, and the wealthy Indian merchant landed at the very place which thirty years before he had quitted to seek his fortune in the East.

His first care upon arriving in London was to secure a house at the West End of the Town, in which he might at once assume that position in society, which he conceived to be open to him without an effort. The house was soon obtained and an unlimited order, accompanied by a reference to his bankers, quickly adorned it with all the skill and taste of London upholstery. Mr. Munroe also found himself warmly greeted by many of his former friends in India, and particularly by the London correspondents of his house, who acted as his agents, and who were well informed as to the extent of his wealth. Nor did the

aspirants for seats in the direction of the East India Company, fail to present themselves at his door, naturally supposing that his name would figure in the list of Proprietors of East India stock, with a full complement of stars appended to it. To this class of visitors must be added the more cautious approaches of relations, who had not emerged from the humble position in society which he himself occupied previously to his migration to the East, and who timidly sought their wealthy kinsman, in the hope that through his assistance and influence the path to wealth might also be opened to them. These and the few stray acquaintances whom good dinners and a large establishment will always attract in London, Mr. Munroe soon found, however, constituted the whole circle of his associates. In the mean time the great stream of fashionable and political life passed him unnoticed, like one of

those eddies which seem chained to a particular spot, while the mighty current of which they form a part flows steadily on.

It has been said,—whether truly or not we cannot affirm, for we seek only to snatch the manners and customs which float on the surface of society, and our modest history does not aspire to the dignity of a Philosophical or Political essay,—but it *has* been said, that the barriers which the policy of our Monarchical and Aristocratical system erects between the various ranks of society, can only be effectually surmounted, and that political power can only be obtained by wealth, sufficient in amount to open the avenues to distinction, combined with abilities capable of making those avenues subservient to the purposes of their possessor. Mere vulgar uneducated wealth, will only attract an amount of ridicule, proportionate to the extent of notoriety

which its owner insists upon acquiring. Science, genius, learning, unassisted by wealth, will make its possessor a member of many a learned society, and the Mæcenas to whom his last work is dedicated, will probably not fail to bid him welcome to his festive board, where he will be considered as ornamental and as much in his proper place, as the last picture purchased to adorn his banqueting room, or the new service of plate which blazes on his sideboard. If there have been a few brilliant exceptions to this rule, they serve but to prove its general correctness, and it is the rare union of the two great advantages we have referred to, that can alone secure the influence and position to which Mr. Munroe's ignorance of English society led him to aspire.

Amongst the acquaintances attracted by Mr. Munroe's principal establishment in — square, was the Honorable Captain Saville Blakeney, a gentleman

evidently possessed of some fortune, and, independently of this, advancing high claims to social consideration; though no one had been sufficiently acute to discover precisely the grounds on which these claims rested. That they were vast, however, was to be gathered from his manner, and if he would have experienced great difficulty in establishing his assumed superiority over other men; yet a vague general notion, based probably on no foundation more solid than the flattery of dependents, certainly floated in his mind, that he was born to be illustrious, and that even those persons of inferior rank in society, who had won distinction and respect by their talents, were destined only to act as foils to the surpassing greatness which would one day develope itself in his own person.

Captain Blakeney was not backward in accepting the proffered friendship of Mr. Munroe. Without admitting him to terms of equality, it was possible he

conceived to make the wealthy merchant subservient to useful purposes. He was not, moreover, averse to seat himself at a luxurious table, where his title to pre-audience was unquestioned, and where he amused a band of willing listeners with anecdotes of mythic personages, not indeed altogether unknown to them by name, for they figured in the list of fashionable arrivals in the newspapers, but who in other respects were purely social abstractions. Here he could give the rein to his imagination without fear of detection, and, fancy free, group the various figures he conjured up in the way most gratifying to himself. As he combined a certain amount of drollery with much apparent sincerity, the one quality served to bear him scathless with those whose credulity was not to be imposed upon, while with the semblance of the other he kept alive the interest of such of his hearers as were less disposed to question his veracity. His acquire-

ments, too, though exceedingly superficial, were versatile. Amongst other pursuits, he sometimes dabbled a little in politics, and had once written an article in one of the daily journals,—but only once, for no persuasion could induce the editor to incur a similar risk a second time. He was so incensed at this gross piece of presumption on the part of a mere “quill driver,” as he contemptuously styled those who hold almost despotic sway over the public mind, that he never again offered to wield his pen in their service. It remains to say of Captain Blakeney, that he never neglected the duty he owed to himself—a duty which with him involved a total disregard of the rights and feelings of others: that in his vocabulary, principle meant expediency: the world the class to which he belonged; the welfare of society, the interest of that class, and his own in particular, as its most important entity.

But no one, not even Captain Blakeney, could remain insensible to Mrs. Munroe's charming and fascinating manner; and such was her influence, that he occasionally endeavoured, when in her company, to divest himself of that offensive egotism, which formed so essential a part of his nature. She did not share in the delusion of her husband; and when, with the quick perception of woman, she saw that he was endeavouring to tread a path unsuited to his talents, she advised and implored him to forbear; but finding her opinion disregarded, with equal good feeling she now seconded his views to the utmost of her power, and the attractions of her drawing room were frequently found greater than any to be met with in the fashionable circles, where the *élite* of London society assembled. Her thoughts and energies had always been devoted to him. She had ever entered with an *entente cordiale* into all his busy schemes.

Throughout a life devoid of felicitous associations, she had invariably displayed a willingness to sacrifice her own wishes, when they in any way interfered with his plans, and had preserved unimpaired the serenity of disposition which had characterized her in youth. Notwithstanding her amiable character, however, she could not at first repress a feeling of antipathy to Captain Blakeney, but conceiving it unjust to entertain an unfavourable impression of any one without a cause, she strove to master it. Her efforts in this respect were attended with success, and Captain Blakeney now frequently alluded in his easy manner to the inauspicious commencement of their acquaintance ; and how much his star was in the ascendant, when the mists and clouds had cleared away which so enviously kept the bright sunbeams she scattered around from ever alighting upon him.

“ Positively,” said Captain Blakeney, as he seated himself at Mr. Munroe’s dinner

table, towards the close of the London season, "I have been apprehensive, till within the last ten minutes, of my liberty. I have been assailed with remonstrance, entreaties, and even, I assure you, Mrs. Munroe, threats, to induce me to break my promise of dining with you to day. As if any consideration whatever could make me give up such a pleasure! My assailants fortunately left me for a few minutes. I instantly took advantage of the respite, and here I am, once more a happy man."

"I am sure," said Mrs. Munroe, "the exertions you have made to give us the pleasure of your society are worthy of our warmest acknowledgments. From what may have arisen this wish to detain you?"

"This is the anniversary of one of the actions in which our regiment was engaged in India, and though, as you are aware, I have left the army; yet they wished me to be present at a dinner that is to be given in commemoration of

the event. By the way, I think Mr. Munroe knew Colonel Merryweather who commanded us at the commencement of the action?"

"Well," replied Mr. Munroe, "and if anything could have mitigated the sorrow I felt at his death, it would have been the gallant manner in which he fell—fighting at the head of his regiment."

"Ah," replied Captain Blakeney, "It was a monstrous thing to send one of Her Majesty's crack hussar regiments out to India. The order would have done credit to the Goths and Vandals, but was wholly unworthy of the Horse Guards in the middle of the nineteenth century. The fact is, that the country cannot spare such men."

"Did you see Colonel Merryweather fall?" asked Mr. Munroe.

"No, I had been sent with a small detachment in pursuit of about five hundred of the enemy that had fled early in the action."

“And by the help of providence, how many of the infidels did you smite?” asked Mrs. Mackintosh, an elderly widow, who, having been on friendly terms with Mr. Munroe in India, had renewed his acquaintance in England, and had subsequently introduced Captain Blakeney, between whom and herself some mysterious bond of connexion apparently existed.

“How many?” repeated Captain Blakeney. “Oh,” he resumed, after a pause, “we rode and they ran till a river stopped their further flight, when they made some show of resistance. They were immediately driven into the river, and the greater part perished within sight of thousands of their countrymen who had come to their rescue on the opposite bank.”

“Unconverted of course?” said Mrs. Mackintosh.

“Most probably,” replied Captain Blakeney, “for the river, as is frequently

the case with such as are fed by mountain streams, was, at that moment, a foaming torrent. I could not, however, allow this consideration to weigh with me. There was an enemy in front, and I gave the order to charge! And such was the dauntless resolution of the men and their high state of discipline, that they swam across in line, and landed on the opposite side as if on parade; with the exception of one man, who, having allowed the tail of his horse to become entangled with his accoutrements, so impeded the animal's exertions, that he fell two or three lengths behind his comrades. Before the evening, however, he had been tried by a drum head Court Martial."

"Ah!" exclaimed Mrs. Mackintosh, in a tone of mingled sorrow and reproof.

"Of course the enemy could offer but little opposition to men so trained," said Mr. Munroe, with a smile.

"Not eventually," replied Captain

Blakeney, "though at first I grant you there was some desperate fighting; but men properly disciplined are equal to anything. Mine were, in the present instance, completely victorious, and such was the number of prisoners we took, that when I ordered all their beards to be cut off—a great indignity to a Mussulman, and therefore a fitting punishment for their presumption in opposing Her Majesty's troops—the whole regiment was supplied with hair mattresses. In the evening we swam across the river again, in line, and returned to camp, but our exultation was immediately checked by hearing of the death of our Colonel. By the way, did he not leave a son called—a—Frank, I think?"

"Yes, yes," said Mr. Munroe impatiently.

"Where is he now?"

"In England."

"In England?" repeated Captain Blakeney.

“Yes, at school, I am his guardian,” said Mr. Munroe, abruptly.

Captain Blakeney looked surprised, and evidently wished to pursue his enquiries further, but hesitated to do so in defiance of these manifestations of impatience on the part of his entertainer, and he therefore let the subject drop for the present, but not without glancing significantly at Mrs. Mackintosh, who instantly cast her eyes to the ground. When the ladies had left the room, however, and the jovial god had opened the hearts and loosened the tongues of his votaries, Captain Blakeney again led this part of the conversation up to the point at which it had terminated. He then quickly ascertained that the object of his enquiry was at school in Cornwall, and that Mr. Munroe defrayed the expenses of his education from a fund of about twenty thousand pounds, the accumulation of some prize money, and of surplus income

which Colonel Merryweather had most unaccountably left in his hands without any instructions.

Captain Blakeney listened to this latter piece of information with such evident interest, and manifested so much surprise that Mr. Munroe laughingly exclaimed, "Why, you would almost lead one to suppose that you were able to throw some light upon the matter!"

"I?" exclaimed Captain Blakeney, with some embarrassment, "how—by what—what do you mean?"

"I merely spoke in jest," replied Mr. Munroe. "All chance of clearing up that mystery has long ceased. The Colonel's will, however, was altogether an extraordinary document."

"You mean the specific bequest of so large a portion of his property to Mrs. Mackintosh, and the absence of all direction as to the residue?"

Mr. Munroe nodded assent.

"It does not," continued Captain

Blakeney, "argue much in her favour. There must have been reasons—peculiar reasons, one would think, for such a proceeding. As to his son, perhaps he adopted this mode of providing for him, knowing that the law would give him what his will left undisposed of."

"It may be so as to Frank," said Mr. Munroe, resuming his usually reserved manner, "though such a course was inconsistent with the known character and habits of my friend. But," he continued, with increased coldness and reserve, "your suggestion with reference to Mrs. Mackintosh, if I understand it rightly, is still less consistent with his character, to say nothing of the injustice you do the lady."

Captain Blakeney felt that he had pushed the subject as far as discretion would permit; and unwilling to appear to take an interest in arrangements with which he was supposed to have no concern, he drew his chair nearer the

end of the table, and commenced a topic to which he was aware his host would not fail to lend a willing ear.

"Of course, Munroe," he commenced in a confidential tone, "you have by this time quite made up your mind to obtain a seat in parliament next election?"

"Nearly," replied Mr. Munroe, "very nearly. Indeed, I think I may venture to say I have."

"Venture to say!" repeated Captain Blakeney almost indignantly, "why your success in the house does not admit of a doubt! Not—a—single—doubt! It is your proper sphere. Your great practical knowledge, your experience, and your habits of business, will, to say nothing of what may happen hereafter, at once make you a friend of incalculable worth to the party you espouse, and a formidable opponent of the adverse side. I would not insult a person of your calibre of understanding by asking

which party you would support. The suppression of the mob, and the preservation of the power and influence of the legitimate rulers of the land, are of course views which everyone who is only guided by a sense of justice would embrace."

"Quite so," returned Mr. Munroe, "I should decidedly support the landed interest; and I dare say you would find that my dislike of the mob is as great as your own."

"Then it is inveterate! And as for those demagogues of the present day, who talk of parliamentary reform and other similar absurdities, why they ought, — they ought to be hanged! What has raised this country to its present elevation but—"

"And what," interposed Mr. Munroe, who perceived that wine and politics were rapidly driving his guest into a high state of excitement, "what, now, is your candid opinion of the best means

to be employed to secure the return of a member to parliament; myself, for instance?"

"You must be entirely guided by circumstances," replied Captain Blakeney, with an immediate change of manner. "I have had some experience in these matters, and I should recommend you, as you have never yet been in parliament, to stand for some small borough, and not spend a farthing more than the legitimate expenses; for in these days, if you indulge in ancient English hospitality, you are as likely as not to be unseated for bribery. Promise anything, and everything—more than the whole House of Commons, or any other house, could perform. Ask them to sit down and think of what they would like to have done, and whatever it may be, prove—*prove* to them, that it is not only to their interest, but to the interest of the country, to the interest of every individual in the country—your own

private interest included—to have their wishes carried out to the letter, and that they cannot fail to be complied with. Should these measures prove inadequate, you might then pay a sum of money into the provincial bank for the purpose, as you would of course give your supporters to understand, of distributing amongst them when the period of petitioning against your return has passed.”

“But the electors may not be willing to record their votes for one who only holds out to them an expectation of future benefit, particularly if some former candidate has ever adopted the means you suggest to beguile them with false hopes, and my opponents should adopt a more practical mode of securing their support. Besides, I cannot say that I feel quite satisfied as to the propriety of your manœuvres.”

“Not satisfied as to the propriety, my dear sir! You really surprise me.

Why everything that secures success is proper under such circumstances. The *end* sanctions the means. You help to preserve the constitution by securing your own return. It must be borne in mind, moreover, that these rascals are really not fit to have a voice in the affairs of the nation. It is a right wrested from us by the demagogues and agitators whom they support, and our only resource is—

“To spoil the spoiler as we may,
And from the robber rend the prey!”

“The candidate is certainly not exclusively responsible for the necessity of having recourse to artifice,” said Mr. Munroe, “for if the electoral body were incorruptible, corruption could scarcely be practised; but I should leave such minor details to the agents I employed.”

“Ah, in your case, again, such a course would be quite right. You

cannot be expected to enter into these details, any more than a commander in chief could be expected to lead a squadron to the charge on the field of battle. I can only say, be careful in the selection of your agents, for if through treachery or want of ability they should fail to secure your return, your defeat, I have no hesitation in saying, would be a public loss."

"Mr. Munroe was in ordinary cases perfectly aware when Captain Blakenev was giving free scope to his imagination. Yet, wonderful to say, he listened to these bold assertions as if they were the candid confession of his guest's convictions; and as the same extravagant ideas had frequently floated before his own vision, it seemed to him that so unsought and spontaneous a declaration in another, was the very strongest testimony in favour of the soundness of his own views. The performance of some street musicians,

who commenced playing in front of the open windows, put a stop for the present to further conversation, and Mr. Munroe sat alternately revolving in his mind the ambitious thoughts which he seemed more and more warranted in entertaining, and the comparative obscurity of his present position. Impatient under the restraints which his ambitious temper taught him to believe were unfairly thrown around him, and discontented with the respectable position in which his character and means placed him, he resolved, while thus pondering, to purchase an estate in the country, and to await in retirement with his family the opportunity for action which the next general election would afford. He was partly led to the latter determination by the precarious state of Mrs. Munroe's health, which had become greatly impaired by her long residence in a tropical climate, and the urgent advice of the

family physician, that she should repair immediately to the sea side. With characteristic energy Mr. Munroe proceeded on the next day to carry these plans into effect. Nor was he long in discovering, with the assistance of his solicitor, that Ulvacombe, in Devonshire, a seat of Lord Carlbrook's, was for sale. That nobleman's embarrassments had rendered it necessary to part with this portion of the family property, and Mr. Munroe deeming it expedient to act with great liberality, the transfer was speedily made, and an acquaintance thus commenced which, from an unforeseen circumstance, subsequently ripened into great intimacy.

Ulvacombe was a large picturesque mansion, close to the sea side, and surrounded by grounds, which, from their elevated position, commanded an extensive view. The wings of the building had evidently been an addition of recent date, but the turrets, ornamented

devices, and quaint appearance of the remaining portion showed that it was one of those beautiful relics of the Elizabethan age, of which a few are still preserved to us. A short distance from the house, and visible from all the front windows, was a miniature lake, whose waters were unrivalled for clearness by any spring in the neighbourhood. On all sides but that by which it was approached from the house its edges were fringed with overhanging bushes, conspicuous amongst which were the honeysuckle and wild rose. The side that had been shorn of these natural ornaments, was traversed by a lawn that in colour would have surpassed the most favoured spots in the emerald isle, and extended from the rippling margin of the lake to the garden, a distance of nearly a quarter of a mile. Beyond, again, a long thicket of trees formed a complete screen, and effectually established the privacy of the inmates. Nor

were they less favoured on the side of the sea, for the grounds comprised a large bay, which could only be approached by the shore, when the tide had receded to its utmost limits.

Such was Ulvacombe, the new abode of Mr. Munroe, and doubtless the novelty of finding himself the proprietor of so magnificent an estate, the pleasure he anticipated from managing it, and the gratification he also expected to derive from being considered a person of consequence in the neighbourhood, tended much to alleviate the disappointment and mortification he had experienced in London, and constituted the best balm for his offended pride.

It was soon however his lot to discover, that a man who has been engaged in a constant routine of occupation, unless he is possessed of resources within himself, instantly finds the inactivity to which he is compelled to submit in a rural life, most dispiriting and irksome. At first

the better cultivation of a piece of ground, the improvement of a hothouse, the erection of lodges, and other pursuits of the same trivial character, supplied the food that was necessary to his restless disposition, but gradually these failed to interest him, his mind craved for more exciting aliment, and in its absence he grew peevish and discontented. Business through life had at once been his occupation and his amusement, and so completely are we the creatures of habit that he pined for it as a child pines for a toy, a lover for his mistress, or the miser for his gold.

But the imaginary evils with which he allowed his peace of mind to be disturbed, were soon superseded by a more legitimate cause for the depression of spirits with which he was haunted. The health of Mrs. Munroe now began to show unequivocal symptoms of decline. Her strength ebbed day by day, the colour completely forsook her fair

cheek, her voice became more and more subdued, and it was painfully evident that the last sad scene on the stage of life was fast approaching.

One evening in the early part of the autumn, Mrs. Munroe, accompanied by her daughter who was now in her sixteenth year, was being wheeled in a chair about the beautiful grounds of Ulvacombe, when on attaining a position that commanded a view of the surrounding country, she dismissed her attendants. The sun was setting on the landscape, and in its soft and refulgent rays, the varying hues of autumn were promiscuously blended on the wooded hills that intervened. So beautiful was the scene that both mother and daughter remained for some minutes contemplating it in silent admiration. There was a striking resemblance between the two, the same soft blue eyes, the same fair and delicate complexion belonged to both. Constance had also inherited in

all its essential points her mother's character. Perhaps in trifles she was in the least degree wayward, but this fault lay entirely on the surface, and might be attributed to the readiness with which all her childish whims had been acceded to, and the absence of all reproach for those juvenile peccadillos, which are common to all the children of Adam, for she had been the idol of Mrs. Munroe, and her father's interest in her had been too slight to induce him to take any share in the formation of her character.

"How beautiful this landscape is," said Mrs. Munroe, at length breaking silence; "and yet I was thinking of how close a resemblance the departing year bears to those whose end is not far distant. Soon the few ornaments that nature still wears will be strewn by the winds, and then the aspect will be as cold and cheerless as the goal to which we are all hastening; and, Constance, I feel that I shall soon be there."

"Oh! mamma," said her daughter, "pray, pray do not say such things. Your spirits are low this evening. There are many, many happy years for you in prospect."

"Not in this world," replied Mrs. Munroe; "but I have not brought up a subject which I know to be painful to you without a cause. It is to impress upon you, dear child, the necessity to seek the aid of Him, by whose assistance alone you can be safe amidst the perils and dangers of the world you will shortly enter. Remember, that though you may have no watchful mother to protect you, there is one who bears more love to all his creatures than we are able to conceive, and never fails to hear those who call upon him. But above all things, remember how uncertain life is, and that at any moment we may be called hence. None of us can ever count upon a single day; not one can even take up an hour glass and say,

'thy course shall be run before mine.' Therefore, Constance, I entreat you to live in the remembrance that the eye of that Judge, before whom you may be summoned to appear without one moment's warning, is ever upon you."

Constance threw her arms round her mother's neck, and in tears promised compliance.

"And now," said Mrs. Munroe, smiling, "I will tell you of a wish that I have formed. It is that at certain times, on every Sabbath evening, for instance, you should, in the solitude of your own chamber, think over those truths which I have frequently endeavoured to impress upon your mind, and recal some of the happy hours we have spent together. Who knows," continued Mrs. Munroe, a slight tinge transfusing itself over her cheek, while her eye kindled with enthusiasm, "but what I, unknown to you, may be present, reading your thoughts, and

blessing you. All is mystery beyond the grave, but, that our spirits are allowed sometimes to visit the scenes where they dwelt while inhabiting the body, does not, I confess, appear to me improbable. It will indeed be a severe trial parting with my darling, but it would greatly relieve the pain of separation, could I be assured that she would grant me this request; or is it too great a boon to ask?"

"Oh, no, no," replied Constance. "But why, mamma, why do you continue to speak in this way? Your indisposition is only temporary."

"I would that it were so for your sake, dear Constance," said Mrs. Munroe.

As she spoke a slight shiver passed through her frame, which did not escape the eye of her daughter, who instantly implored her to return home. "This wind is so very searching, mamma; pray do not remain out in it any longer.

I will call the servants." And so saying, Constance ran across the lawn and beckoned to the men, who were only waiting at a little distance till their services should be required. They soon came, and Mrs. Munroe was conveyed back to the house, which she never again quitted alive.

Indeed, her prognostications were but too quickly verified. She had caught cold, which in her delicate state was of itself sufficient cause for apprehension; but the next day, when it settled upon her chest, the medical man who always attended her intimated that the result would be fatal; and in a short time not a hope could be entertained by the most sanguine. Towards evening, on the day when her recovery was finally despaired of, she had been half unconscious for some time, when, as if awakening from a dream, she looked around for a minute, and then, giving one of her hands to

her husband and the other to her daughter, with a smile of ineffable sweetness, addressed a parting word to each. Even the hard nature of Mr. Munroe was so affected, that for the first time since he was a child, tears flowed from his eyes, and he sobbed aloud. The sorrow of Constance was too deep for any outward manifestation. She glanced from the physician, in whose look was written, as legibly as words could have made it, that there was no hope, and then upon the resigned countenance of her who was passing to another world; but not a word, not a sound escaped her. The apathy of grief had benumbed her faculties, and she remained crushed by the immensity of her misfortune.

In a few minutes Mrs. Munroe again evinced a desire to speak, but was unable to articulate aloud. Constance, seeing that the glance was directed towards herself, leant over and

placed her ear close to the pillow, and heard her mother faintly whisper, "Remember your promise." She could only signify acquiescence by a look. A smile now hovered over the lips of Mrs. Munroe. She endeavoured to press the hands that held her own, but the power had ebbed away, and in a few minutes she expired.

Few things after this remained impressed upon the mind of Constance. She only remembered being forced from the room where that dear form lay, and then all recollection ceased. But let us hasten from a scene so mournful; for although it may be matter for deep reflection why we should look with unalloyed pain on such an event, yet it is beyond a doubt that the greater the virtues, the more kind and benevolent the disposition, and the more beloved the person who has just left a troubled existence for one of un-

changeable bliss, the greater is the grief which falls upon those who have witnessed the effect or reaped the benefit of these qualities.

The arrangements for the funeral having been completed, the fifth day after the decease of Mrs. Munroe was the one appointed for her interment. All the conventional forms which custom has established as proofs of our respect for the dead distinguished the procession which accompanied her remains to the grave. A long line of mourning coaches was followed by one of private carriages equal in extent. Plumes and scarfs nodded and waved in profusion, as if the pomps and vanities of this world could attend us beyond the grave!

When the pageant reached the village church the minister was seen issuing from the porch. The character of the deceased was not unknown to him, and deeply affected by the recollection of the virtues he had so often witnessed, and

by the general sympathy evinced by those around him, he unconsciously performed in a more impressive manner, and with deeper pathos than usual, the sublime and affecting service for the burial of the dead. When these last rites had been performed, and Constance quitted the grave of the only person who had ever evinced any sincere affection for her, and to whom her young heart had clung with such devoted fondness, she felt more acutely than she had hitherto done her desolate position, and for the first time began to comprehend the full extent of the loss she had sustained.

In the evening, as her father and herself sat together in the drawing room, which had always been rendered so cheerful by her whom they had that day followed to the tomb, they remained silently engaged with their own thoughts till the clock on the mantel piece pointed out the hour of midnight.

Constance rose, paused for a minute as if in doubt, and then, with one of those impulses not unfrequently displayed by the gentler sex, went up to her father and threw her arms round his neck, but he frigidly disengaged himself from her embrace, and the scarcely audible good night seemed to freeze upon his lips. She ran to her own room and buried her sorrows in her pillow.

Good night! How universal the salutation, but under what different circumstances is it uttered by thousands! With what love does the mother bend over her first-born; and while uttering with her lips, good night, silently offer up a prayer for the protection of her infant. With what seeming mockery, again, does the jailor bid the condemned felon, good night, who the next morning is to expiate his crimes upon the scaffold; and yet they are the same words, and

have the same meaning; are used in palaces and in roofless huts; by the rich man in his luxurious abode, and by wayfarers in desert places, whose only canopy is the sky, while they rely upon Him who slumbers not for protection.

CHAPTER III.

The civil law has wisely determined, that a master who strikes at a scholar's eye shall be considered as criminal.—*Doctor Johnson.*

THERE is an exuberance of spirits in youth which is impatient of sorrow. At that happy period of life, if the feelings can be diverted from the subject

which has painfully engrossed them, they rush with impetuosity into their natural channels, and the burden, which bears down those of maturer age, is so lightly and unconsciously cast aside,—the reaction from a state of deep despondency to one of comparative happiness and enjoyment is apparently so sudden and complete,—as to lead the superficial observer to suppose that the change, which can be traced almost entirely to physical causes, is the result of heartless or selfish indifference.

Constance's grief, which had been infinitely deeper and more acute than that of Mr. Munroe, was the first to subside. Gradually the woe, which she at first thought would prove unconquerable, began to yield to that melancholy consolation, which the bereaved derive from recalling the virtues and personal attributes of those for whom they grieve, and from dwelling with a mournful and almost religious pleasure on the various

acts of kindness and affection they have experienced. Not so Mr. Munroe. He continued for months in the morbid state into which he had at first been plunged. His grief was far less disinterested than that of his daughter, and his regret for himself far more poignant than for the death of the person for whom he seemed to mourn. The only being on whom he had ever bestowed the least affection was lost to him for ever, and the feeling paramount in his mind was, that an irremediable injury had been unjustly inflicted upon himself.

After several months thus spent, he became vaguely sensible of the futility of persevering in such a line of conduct, and prepared sullenly to submit to his fate. The first thing that occurred to him, on this change taking place, was the necessity of placing some person at the head of his household; but upon considering which of his relations would prove most eligible for this office, each

appeared deficient in so many necessary qualifications, that he was unable at first to determine upon the least objectionable. After a careful review, his choice was at length divided between two of his sisters. One of these ladies was an inveterate enemy to the king's English, and the other, who had taken a studious turn, had rushed into the opposite extreme, and put forward lofty, though very questionable claims to scientific acquirements. The ultimate conclusion he arrived at, however, was that the objections to the learned Dorothy were light when compared with the coarseness and ignorance of her sister. To her, therefore, he eventually sent an invitation to make Ulvacombe her home—an invitation she readily accepted; but as it is now quite time to introduce to the reader one who is destined to occupy an important position in this history, we must leave Miss Dorothy Munroe to make her *entré*

at Ulvacombe, and proceed to a description of Mr. Frank Merryweather.

Colonel Merryweather, as already stated, had met his death in action ; but before entering on the campaign in which he fell, he had appointed his half brother, Mr. Ponsonby, a civil servant of the East India Company, and Mr. Munroe, his brother-in-law, joint guardians of his only child, Frank, then a boy of eight years of age. His wife had been dead some years previously to this period, and to superintend his house, as well as to take care of his son, he had availed himself of the services of Mrs. Mackintosh, the widow of an officer who had been in his own regiment, and whose death had left her in reduced circumstances. Thus matters remained for some time, but at last rumour, upon whose tongue "continual slanders ride," hesitated not to assert that the protracted stay of Mrs. Mackintosh in Colonel Merryweather's house, was attributable to

other motives than a matronly affection for Frank, or any particular *penchant* for the office of housekeeper.

These insinuations had no sooner reached her ears than she immediately sought a private interview with Colonel Merryweather, and during a passionate flood of tears, painted in glowing terms the calumnies with which she was assailed. Colonel Merryweather was not proof against this appeal, and, whether from an exaggerated sense of the personal obligation he had incurred to protect from injury, one so entirely dependent upon him, or whether he had really formed an attachment to her :—certain it is that the result of the interview, was an agreement to have recourse to a marriage as the most effectual way of silencing a censorious world. It was also agreed at the suggestion of Mrs. Mackintosh, that they should separate for a few months before the ceremony took place, lest it should

appear that they were driven to this step by the censures of their neighbours, rather than urged to adopt it by their own free will. Mrs. Mackintosh therefore left the province in which Colonel Merryweather's regiment was stationed, and proceeded to Bombay whither she had not arrived many days before there appeared among the *on dits* of one of the newspapers of that renowned presidency, a paragraph, informing the inhabitants that the amiable, accomplished, and talented Mrs. M—k—h, who had just arrived from one of the upper provinces, would, it was confidently expected, in a few months, bestow her hand upon the no less distinguished Colonel M——r. Harlequin's wand could not have wrought a more immediate change than did this announcement in Mrs. Mackintosh's position. All her former detractors now vied with one another in paying her attention, and no one thought of giving an entertainment without eagerly solicit-

ing the pleasure of her presence. But at the very zenith of her popularity, a war suddenly broke out. Colonel Merryweather's regiment was one of the first ordered to the scene of action, and with the exception of a hurried letter he wrote to her on the eve of marching, his death was the only intelligence she received of him. There were not wanting those who professed to condole with her. There were not perhaps wanting those who did so with sincerity; but all alike were wonder struck when it appeared that Colonel Merryweather had left her the great bulk of his property, and that his own son Frank, who, on the first commencement of the war, had been despatched to Bombay and placed under the care of his uncle, Mr. Ponsonby, was not mentioned in his father's will.

The lawyers, however, could discover no flaw in the document, and Mrs. Mackintosh returned to England the possessor of some thousands a-year. She

set up a large establishment in Eton Place, and having surrounded herself with every comfort she could devise, prepared to devote the remainder of her life to the practice of evangelical principles.

In the mean time Mr. Ponsonby and Mr. Munroe, who had been requested by Colonel Merryweather to become the guardians of his child, in case of any accident happening to himself, having conferred together, deemed it expedient to send Frank to England, that he might commence his pilgrimage in that path in which the chief land marks are an Ainsworth's Dictionary and a Greek Lexicon on the one side, and a rod on the other. On his arrival he was forthwith consigned to the care of his aunt, Miss Dorothy Munroe, under whose auspices with the assistance of a private tutor, he proceeded to take the first sip at the fountain of knowledge. This arrangement, however, lasted but a

short time. Miss Dorothy Munroe's temper was not of the serenest kind nor that of her charge the most complying and personal encounters became of such frequent occurrence, that she was fain to send him to school, where he had been suffered to remain without even the intermission of holidays up to the present time.

He was now seventeen years of age, of an average height, and with no reason to complain of his personal appearance, unless indeed it were on account of its being so favourable, for as yet that circumstance had been rather a drawback than an advantage to him. Dr. Puzzle, the learned Theban at the head of the establishment where he was placed, used frequently to say, that it was entirely owing to his outward appearance that he was such an idle, self-willed fellow, and after an oration, which Frank Merryweather had long known off by heart, invariably wound

up by telling him, that he was "a goodly looking apple but rotten at the core;"—a saying which his pupils were made to believe was original.

Frank Merryweather, upon first making his appearance at Dr. Puzzle's establishment, had, as a preliminary measure, been well browbeaten, assured that he was a dunce, that it was quite impossible to make anything of him, and that he was sent to school because he must be sent somewhere, with various other remarks of a like encouraging nature. Whereupon, he very naturally imbibed a dislike for that which he was compelled to drudge at, without as he supposed a chance of ever being able to acquire. This feeling having once become inplanted in his mind, was not likely soon to be eradicated, and the consequence was, that as he advanced in years, he turned his attention to things which presented greater attractions to him.

It cannot be denied, therefore, that frequently when he ought to have been engaged in translating a Greek play, or an ode of Horace, he was deep in the mysteries of Madame de Stael's "Corinne," Scott's "Marmion," Byron's "Corsair," or Shakspeare's plays, all of which had been surreptitiously introduced amongst a heap of dictionaries and Latin and Greek authors, into the desk at which he sat.

During the latter portion of his sojourn at Doctor Puzzle's seminary, that worthy pedagogue had also taken an extreme dislike to him. This dislike was occasioned partly by Frank having never in the Doctor's opinion, thrown a lustre on his establishment, by prodigies of learning, but it was chiefly due to a conviction in the Doctor's mind, that Frank Merryweather was the principal party in a practical joke that had been played upon himself, and which he

never thought of without a deep feeling of resentment.

Doctor Puzzle was particularly sleek in person, and neither his appearance nor his immense powers of deglutition, would, *a priori*, lead to the supposition that his occupation as a schoolmaster was unfavourable to his health. As he dined with the boys, it was at dinner that his gastronomic powers were chiefly displayed, and there also it was that these attributes chiefly attracted the remarks and criticisms of those by whom he was surrounded. Indeed we have it on the authenticity of several of the junior boys, that the Doctor had frequently been known to help himself five times to mutton, although he had refused them a second slice. It was also Doctor Puzzle's practice during school hours, to write long letters to his friends, bemoaning the unhappy fate, which had consigned his talents and acquirements to the drudgery of a school, and it was

moreover his wont, to draw alarming but fanciful pictures of the effects he anticipated to his health, from the severity and monotony of his daily pursuits. On one of these occasions he was engaged in the construction of a well rounded period, into which he had infused a greater degree of pathos than usual, from his recent ineffectual efforts to make a particularly dull lad construe Dido's lament for Æneas, when he was suddenly called out, and left his unfinished effusion open on his desk. During his absence he had not ceased to think of the glowing description of his sufferings which he was about to convey to his friend, and in his own mind had settled the touching appeal by which he intended to stir his feelings to their inmost depths. His mingled astonishment and indignation may therefore be imagined, when he found, upon his return, his task already performed, and that in addition to "The cares of this school make me

weary of life," with which he had commenced the laboured and classical paragraph which occupied his thoughts, he found carefully introduced in a handwriting which imitated his own, the words, "And if it were not for the mutton I should die." The doctor stormed, fumed, and threatened, but to no purpose. No one was found sufficiently treacherous to betray the perpetrators of this gross act of insubordination, and finding that his efforts were of no avail, he swallowed his indignation with his next dinner, though he ever afterwards entertained a firm belief that Frank Merryweather was the culprit.

The only permanent friendship that Frank Merryweather formed at Doctor Puzzle's school was with a lad about his own age, whose name was Somerville. Both had good natural abilities, though entirely different in character. Merryweather seldom mastered the details of any subject accurately and perhaps from

impatience, or a mistaken notion that it was not necessary, had almost disqualified himself from doing so. This defect however was in some measure redeemed by the ability and power with which he arrived at a sound conclusion, even from imperfect premises. With him the great and immediate object was always the result, and with Somerville on the other hand, this was totally disregarded till the details had been carefully analysed.

In their scholastic attainments, therefore, they were not unequally matched, though each was astonished at the performances of the other. Merryweather, at the accuracy with which Somerville could make a quotation, remember a date, or explain the most trivial matter connected with the subject upon which they were engaged, while the latter would wonder equally how his school-fellow could possibly have formed a sound opinion, without examining step by step the grounds on which it was based.

Differing from each other in these respects, they had nevertheless many noble traits of character in common, and the frequent instances in which the natural generosity of their dispositions had prompted them to act in concert, had perhaps served to cement their friendship more closely than would have been the case had their talents been more similar in character.

Merryweather and Somerville had now arrived at the age looked forward to by the school boy with so much eagerness, when jackets are finally discarded for tail coats, and the discipline of school is exchanged for the temptations, the dangers, and severer discipline of the world. Somerville was to leave that half year, but had it not been for an unforeseen occurrence, it is probable, under the circumstances, that Merryweather would have been allowed to continue his studies for a much longer time at our worthy pedagogue's.

One day a little boy, while playing near the Doctor's study, happened to kick a football through one of the panes of glass. It unfortunately alighted on his head, and caused his long nose to come into violent contact with the book he was reading. It would require one of the similes of Homer adequately to illustrate the fury with which the indignant pedagogue rushed out, cane in hand, and demanded the name of the culprit. The little urchin was just about to beg piteously for mercy, when Merryweather, glancing first at his feeble frame and diminutive size, and then at the symptoms of ungovernable passion evinced by Dr. Puzzle, stepped up to the irate school master, and with unparalleled coolness said, "It was my doing."

"Then," said the Doctor grasping more firmly his cane, "you have merited and shall receive exemplary punishment notwithstanding your years." But glancing first at the instrument

which was to carry his threat into execution, and from thence to the broad shoulders of Merryweather, and the determined expression of his eye, he added in a voice almost choked by passion "I'll expel you, sir. That's what I'll do, and then you will be disgraced for life, and cast out from all society."

"I would suggest to you," replied Merryweather, "that you slightly over-rate your powers, if you think that any act of your's can ever have an effect upon my movements hereafter."

"We shall see. Go and pack up your things, and be off. Get away with you. Go along."

"If it were not for the mutton I should die," said Merryweather as he still kept the same position.

The Doctor could no longer restrain himself. With his cheeks puffed out, and his face the colour of vermillion, he rushed at his pupil. Merryweather on the other hand excited by the threat

and insulting language which had been addressed to him, defended himself with all the skill and strength he could command. The Doctor's good living had entirely unfitted him for the encounter he was now engaged in, and although he maintained the contest with great perseverance, it soon became evident that he was incapable of supporting the unusual exertions he was compelled to make, while his starting eyes, and red and puffed out cheeks, gave his face an appearance as if it was about to explode with his efforts to draw breath. In the mean time the play-ground echoed with cries of "go it Merryweather, at him again, he'll soon be done," which were vociferated with all the glee which a recollection of canes and rods engendered when their favourite had the advantage, and were uttered in tones of encouragement when he was temporarily worsted.

"There," said Merryweather, finally seating his opponent on a quickset

hedge, which bounded one side of the playground, and extricating himself from his grasp, "perhaps that will be a lesson to you for the future that you have no right to gratify your temper by ill treating your pupils."

"Get away out of my house," said the Doctor rising with evident pain from the seat he had been accommodated with, and making the best of his way into the house.

There was now a general clustering round Merryweather, and three cheers were given him in honour of his victory, but these manifestations of delight quickly subsided, for it immediately occurred to those who were thus testifying their joy, that their schoolfellow was about to leave them, and as he was a great favourite, this was looked forward to with general regret.

"Will you be obliged to go Merryweather?" said the little fellow whom he had saved from an unjust chastisement.

"There can be little doubt about that," said Merryweather, laying his hand kindly upon the shoulder of his young *protégé*. "For the future you must take care not to let footballs alight on the Doctor's head."

"Dont go till he makes you," was the unsophisticated entreaty of the boy.

"Aye, dont go till he makes you," was now re-echoed by the bystanders.

But he was saved the trouble of making any answer to this appeal, for a servant who now made his appearance informed Merryweather that he had his master's orders to have the gig ready in half an hour, to convey him and his luggage to the place where the coach passed, which would take him almost to the gates of Ultracombe, his guardian's residence.

The preparations for departure were soon completed, and the hardest part of all came—parting with his school-fellows—and with Merryweather this was

a much greater trial than it would have proved for those amongst their number, who had always been kindly received every holidays by relations and friends. At last the moment came, when the farewell word could no longer be delayed. Every one came eagerly forward to give him a cordial shake of the hand. Promises to write, which however were never kept, were reiterated with the most solemn assurances by every individual. One hearty cheer was given him when he entered the gig, and as Merryweather waved his hat in acknowledgement, the horse started forward at a brisk pace, and soon he had left behind him the house that for so many years had been his only home.

CHAPTER IV.

Let the proud sex possess their vaunted powers ;
Be other triumphs, other glories ours !
The gentler charms which wait on female life,
Which grace the daughter and adorn the wife,
Be these our boast ;—

Hannah More.

It was late in the evening before the coach in which Merryweather had obtained a place, arrived opposite the

lodge of Mr. Munroe's house, but as the spring was far advanced, there still lingered a remnant of light. Descending from his place beside the coachman, who on receiving a larger fee than usual, was considerate enough to express a hope that he should have the pleasure of taking him up again some day, he presented himself and his portmanteau at the gate and just as the "All right" of the guard, followed by an application of the coachman's whip, was heard, Merryweather pulled the lodge bell. It was a rich deep toned bell, well calculated to impress the mind of the candidate for admission with a due sense of the extent and importance of the mansion he was about to enter, as well as of the affluence and dignity of the proprietor. Scarcely had its reverbaratory sounds ceased, when the gate was opened by a prim looking matron, much to whose astonishment, for his arrival was of course unexpected, Merryweather, after leaving directions

respecting his portmanteau, walked past on his way to the house. Although not one to attach much importance to wealth or rank for their own intrinsic worth, yet he could not help feeling his disinclination for the approaching interview with his uncle, which under any circumstances could not fail of being disagreeable, considerably increased, as he observed the manifold signs of the former which on every side met his gaze as he advanced. There were no means of escaping it however. It was to be gone through and the sooner therefore the better. I really see no reason, he thought, why I should attach so much importance to this guardian of mine. I suppose it is that the impressions of childhood are not easily effaced, for he is a perfect stranger to me and nepotism not being one of his characteristics, he has never but once thought it worth while to see me. If I were only independent—"but *laissez aller*," he said

aloud, as he lifted the knocker of the door and gave a sharp rat-tat-tat.

"Mr. Munroe is at home I presume?" said Merryweather entering the hall as soon as the door opened.

"I'll go and see sir," said the servant.

"You may spare yourself that trouble," said Merryweather, taking off his upper coat, "and show me in at once because I must see him."

"Oh, very well, sir, if it's important," replied the servant, "this way if you please,—Name—sir?"

"It's of no consequence—I will announce myself." As he said this he entered a spacious library, where a globe lamp with a shade around it, cast a flood of light upon the table, but left the remainder of the room in comparative obscurity.

Mr. Munroe who had heard the knock at the door, rose as Merryweather entered, and lifted the shade from the lamp. Seeing how young a man his

visitor was, he said in a testy tone, while the slight inclination of his head could scarcely be called an acknowledgment of Merryweather's bow. "May I ask to what particular circumstance I am indebted for the honour of a visit at this unusual hour?"

"I am your nephew," said Merryweather.

"Nephew? nephew?" said Mr. Munroe, "I have no such relation."

"There is no tie of consanguinity between us, I am perfectly aware," said Merryweather rather pointedly, "but I am your nephew by marriage, and what is perhaps more to the purpose, I am your ward, and my name, Frank Merryweather, is doubtless more familiar to you than my appearance. In your hands have been placed means for my support, and there is now no other house than yours to which I can go, or I should not have troubled you with my presence."

"And pray, what is the reason" said Mr. Munroe, his wrath rapidly rising, "that you have left the school at which you were placed?"

"Circumstances occurred which prevented my remaining any longer there."

"Circumstances occurred indeed! What do you mean by 'circumstances occurred'? I suppose the real fact is that you have been misbehaving yourself and have been expelled?"

"If it is not your intention, sir," said Merryweather, "to receive the explanations I am ready to give in a more temperate mood, I must decline giving them altogether."

"Oh! indeed, young gentleman. Well proceed. Let us hear," said Mr. Munroe, throwing himself back in a chair.

"The facts are soon told," said Merryweather seating himself. "I took upon myself the blame of an accident that happened. Doctor Puzzle made use of most abusive language, which drew a re-

tort from me, and in a very short time we were engaged in a harmless, though well contested struggle, which lasted upwards of a quarter of an hour."

"So you call this an explanation, young gentleman, do you?" said Mr. Munroe. "I should rather look upon it as a confession of your guilt; which you know it would be of no use endeavouring to conceal.

"Call it what you will," said Merryweather, the natural impetuosity of his disposition obtaining a complete mastery of his feelings. "I am indifferent. But though my conduct may be censurable, surely I may with some justice complain of yours. To whom, sir, I would ask are you indebted for your present position? Friendless you were on your first arrival in India, and had it not been for my father, who took you by the hand, introduced you, aye, and from his own means helped you to set up in business; it is not perhaps too much to say that

your present position would be that of a subordinate in some house of agency. In what manner you have repaid the kindness of your benefactor towards his only child, I leave you to answer."

"I—I sent you to school," said Mr. Munroe. "I could not have done more if you had been my own son. But how have you learnt so much concerning affairs connected with—with the family?"

"My Uncle Ponsonby has written to me by every mail for two or three years past," said Merryweather, unable to repress a smile at the change which his words had effected; "and amongst other kind things has kept my purse well supplied, which otherwise I think would have gone pretty empty. What I valued far more than this, however, was the kindness of his letters."

"Well," said Mr. Munroe, after some consideration, "I suppose you have learnt from the same source that I am one of your father's executors? Now, you have

only to enter some profession, and I shall be able to place in your own hands the property you are entitled to; and then, of course, you will be able to choose an abode for yourself. Have you ever considered this question?"

"Yes," said Merryweather, "I should wish to enter the army."

"Yes, yes, it was your father's profession," said Mr. Munroe, pensively, whilst a ray of good feeling struggled for pre-eminence in his breast; "and a braver officer or a worthier man never existed. I cannot wish you better than to follow in his footsteps. However," he continued, resuming his former manner, "you are of course aware that some delay must take place before you can obtain a commission?"

Merryweather instantly perceived the course of ideas which had suggested the latter part of Mr. Munroe's remark, and it effectually checked the expression of gratitude which had risen to his lips on

hearing the eulogium paid to the memory of his father.

"And in the meantime," he said, "may I ask what plan you think of adopting with regard to me?"

"The only course that I can see open," said Mr. Munroe, "is for you to remain here. I will write to Lord Carlbrook about you to-morrow, who, I have no doubt, will be willing to serve me in this matter; but at the soonest a commission will not be procurable for three or four months. You will find," he resumed, after a pause, "my sister in the drawing room. I suppose you recollect her?"

Merryweather, on whose mind existed an indelible impression of Miss Dorothy Munroe's appearance, answered "perfectly," and after thanking Mr. Munroe for the trouble he was about to take on his behalf, he made his way to the drawing room.

On opening the door, he was surprised to see, not the countenance of his former instructress, of which he entertained so lively a recollection, but that of a young and beautiful girl. He was so bewildered at what seemed to be a strange and wonderful metamorphosis, that he remained with the door in his hand, without either advancing or retreating. On the table was an urn, hissing and bubbling away in a most lively manner, and sending up a little column of steam from its troubled depths towards the ceiling. The remainder of the "tea equipage" was also there, and seated before it was the young lady with a book in her lap.

Just as it had occurred to Merryweather that this could be no other than his cousin, mention of whom he now recollected had been made in one of his letters from India, though the circumstance had entirely escaped him in the excitement of the day; the young

lady herself, without lifting her eyes from her book, broke the silence by saying, "you may tell your master that tea is ready, John."

There was something that struck Merryweather as being so particularly ludicrous in his position at that moment, that in spite of his efforts, he broke into an immoderate fit of laughter, which caused Constance to look up with astonishment at so unexpected a departure from decorum on the part, as she thought, of one of the domestics.

"Oh, I beg your pardon," she said, hastily closing the book she had been so intent upon and rising with some confusion.

"The apology is due from me," said Merryweather advancing to the table, "though really I must be sufficiently ungallant as to make your mistake the excuse for my conduct. I think however, if there was any kind person

present to introduce us, we should hear that we were cousins."

"Cousins?" said Constance, with animation, "then you are Frank Merryweather?"

"Ah I see," said Merryweather, taking the hand that was held out to him, "that you are well versed in the family history."

"My Mother," replied Constance, as a shade passed over her handsome features, "used frequently to talk about you and therefore I have long known you by name. She used often to say when we first arrived here, that as soon as she recovered sufficient strength she should pay you a visit, but—but, alas! that time never came."

As Constance said this, she had turned her face away from the light, and Merryweather perceiving that she with difficulty controlled the emotion which the subject had caused her, remained silent for some moments. At last he

observed, "Why Cousin, it is surely not advisable to allow our thoughts to dwell so much upon the past."

"True, true," she said, replacing a handkerchief by her side and endeavouring to look cheerful. "I do not intend the first moment we have become acquainted to weary you with my sorrows. That would be a poor welcome and make you speedily regret your arrival among us. I would not on any account that you should do so, for indeed I am very glad that you have come."

"And I am equally glad of it now," replied Merryweather, "though half an hour ago I confess I entertained very different feelings on the subject. But fortune is frequently most bountiful to us when we least expect any of her favours, and this day, which has made us acquainted I shall ever esteem the happiest of my life."

Merryweather had not yet learnt to conceal his thoughts, and he uttered these words with a sincerity and warmth, that made the colour rise to his cousin's cheek. There is, however, a freemasonry in youth, difficult to define, and unintelligible perhaps to themselves, which by a far quicker process than speech, transmits the favourable impression they make upon each other,—a mysterious but intuitive feeling, which refuses utterance to ought that can either wound or offend. Constance, therefore, evinced no symptoms of annoyance, but looking up archly, she said, "Have you ever—ever formed such sudden friendship *before*, cousin?"

"No, indeed," replied Merryweather, "nor, I am bound to say, such sincere ones, for though I do not mean to underrate my attachment for my late companions, still they were not—not in any way related to me. Indeed, for

years past I have not seen any one even remotely connected with my family."

"You do not return into Cornwall, cousin, I hope?" said Constance, after a pause. "It would be so very tiresome if you were to run away again, now that you have at last come to see us.

"No; I shall never go back there. But the profession I have just told my uncle I should wish to enter, will probably oblige me to travel much further than the spot I have just quitted."

"You mean the army, of course," said Constance, taking down a screen with apparent unconcern from the mantelshelf; "but why do you choose such a profession? There are surely plenty of others to go abroad and fight our battles for us?"

"Why, yes, I suppose there are," replied Merryweather, laughing, "but they probably all have friends wishing them to stay at home, who would

consider it a great hardship that *their* relatives should be selected to incur danger and privation for the public good. Seriously, however, cousin, I must make a choice of a profession, you know, and I think the army is the one for which I am best adapted. Not that I am at all sure that I do not begin to repent my decision; but my uncle has promised to write to Lord Carlbrook for a commission for me, and he would think me a vacillating sort of person if I were to tell him that I had changed my mind. I must say, though, that were it possible I should be very glad to remain here,—I will not say *for ever*, because I am superstitious enough to consider that a term of ill omen,—but for a period to which I will assign no limit. Whatever were to be the lapse of time, I should be unjustly diffident, were I to doubt of happiness with a cousin for my companion, whose bright looks and

kind words have already revolutionised most of my thoughts and feelings."

What reply Constance would have made to this gallant speech must ever remain unknown, for at this moment the door opened, and Miss Dorothy Munroe, whom Merryweather instantly recognised, made her appearance.

She was now a lady of a "certain age," a saying which, however, we know from very high authority, has a signification very different from that which the words taken literally would imply; for of all things a lady's age is, *par excellence*, most uncertain when defined by such a term. To be more accurate, then, Dorothy Munroe was beyond being called *passée*, and had certain undeniable marks of age about her, which were rendered perhaps more conspicuous by the pertinacious manner in which she kept her eyes closed to the fact,—her own opinion being that she was quite as young looking as when

she was twenty years of age. A disposition on the part of her hair to fall off might certainly have been considered characteristic of the longevity of its capillary existence; but this difficulty was got over by giving the name of "incipient baldness" to such patches as were denuded of this natural ornament. At such moments she would express much regret that caps were not worn by young people, quickly adding, however, "It is quite impossible to begin wearing them at my time of life." A low dress was certainly not the most becoming attire that Dorothy Munroe could have assumed, her attenuated figure showing to a considerable disadvantage in such a costume. But of course the objection to her wearing caps, applied equally to her going otherwise than *decottee* of an evening. If Dorothy Munroe, however, was eccentric in her dress, infinitely more eccentric was she in her form of speech,—in the choice

of words it was her pleasure to make, and in her manner of delivering them. It having always been her ambition to be considered a person of great literary attainments, she had read to some extent, if that could be called reading which enabled her to extract just enough from the works which engaged her attention, to confound the ignorant with words of—

“Learned length and thund’ring sound,”

and to convince the well informed of the emptiness of her pretensions. The acquirement on which she most prided herself, therefore, was her command of language, and however trivial the conversation or whoever the person she was addressing, she never lost an opportunity of evolving some word interminably long and unusually sonorous. While giving utterance to this singular phraseology she would gradually

bend forward in her chair, protruding her long and now sharpened chin in the same progressive manner, till the chosen word was fairly jerked over this acute and intervening promontory. Her exertions, too, on these occasions always appeared to afford her considerable constitutional relief, and every such achievement was invariably followed by a look of mingled placidity and triumph, which spread itself in smiles over her satisfied countenance,—the *tout ensemble*, as she recovered her former position, forcibly recalling to the military man the one, two, *three* of the drill sergeant.

“How do you do, aunt?” said Merryweather, when she had advanced a little way into the room.

“Ah!” replied Dorothy Munroe, “and is it really so, or am I under some infatuated delusion?”

“I really cannot undertake to say,” said Merryweather, “but whether or not I am your nephew.”

"Delightful coincidence! But what happy combination of circumstances has produced your arrival here?"

Merryweather now recapitulated the whole of the day's adventures, at which Dorothy Munroe was of course proportionably shocked, and said,—“Subordination to proper authority was never one of your characteristics, Frank. But how did you like Cornwall; did you find the air salubrious?”

“The *first* time,” said Merryweather with some emphasis, “that such questions have ever been put to me. I can answer them both, however, in the affirmative. The part of the country in which I lived was beautiful, and the air extremely healthy.”

“I have heard that the soil is not so feracious as in this county?”

“I believe not,” replied Merryweather, drawing a deep breath, and leaning back in his chair, with the look of one who was about to be made a martyr.

Miss Dorothy paused, eyed him in this quiescent state for a moment, a little distrustfully, but unable to repress what was at that moment surging in her mind, she hurriedly asked, "Does not the indigency of the lower classes upon that part of the coast compel them to become exclusively ichthyophagists?"

"Not that I am aware of," said Merryweather, after some hesitation. "But may I ask why you should seek out so unusual a term? I confess I should not have known your meaning, had I not been so recently engaged on my Greek Lexicon, and thought of the derivation of the word."

"My dear Frank, your surprise is really most flattering," said Dorothy, with the most affable of smiles. "There are those, I know, who maintain that to excel in scholastic acquirements is not the province of our sex, and indeed such are the anfractuosities of the human

mind that though there is much divari-
cation upon the subject, yet with some
it has undoubtedly become established
as a fact. I need not say that I am one
who entertains totally different views,
and you must therefore really excuse me
if the indelible effect of my interesting
studies, should occasionally make my
conversation burst through those con-
ventional shackles which imprison the
ordinary speech of social intercourse,
and induce me to soar upwards in a
purer strain."

"Oh certainly," said Merryweather,
"but I think you overlook one thing,
aunt, that on such occasions you may
sometimes fail to be quite intelligible to
those whom you address."

The effect of this equivocal re-
mark on Dorothy Munroe's counte-
nance, was to make it crimson with
anger, and throwing herself back in her
chair, she commenced speaking in a
key which, compared with her former

one, was as the whistling of a steam engine to the warbling of a wren.

"And the first thing you do, sir, on your arrival in my brother's habitation, is to cut me with the keen edge of your satire! But I would have you know, sir, that however inopinate your conduct may be, a mind strengthened by the study of philosophy and by general research, is at any moment ready to cope, in a calm collected manner, with the most covert and subtle invectives, or the most terrible abuse."

"But my dear aunt," said Merryweather, really distressed at the effect produced by his observation. "I did not intend to use words that by any ingenuity could be construed into meaning either one or the other."

"Think not" said Dorothy Munroe, in the same excited manner, "that I am unable to tear aside the veil which would hide your meaning from a less penetrating eye."—

Here the current of her ideas apparently became checked by her feelings, and she allowed a profusion of tears to flow, which seemed to mock all her efforts to stop them with a pocket handkerchief; but upon finding that this useful article of dress had become impregnated with *rouge*, she hastily left the room to calm her agitation in her own apartment.

"I see" said Merryweather to his cousin as soon as she had closed the door, "that years have not effected any change in my aunt."

"Oh! I assure you that aunt Dorothy is extremely partial to me," replied Constance. "This is partly owing I believe to the great attention I pay to her long dissertations, which you would allow to be very creditable, if you only knew how very tedious I find them. However," she continued, laughing, "you shall do penance for me sometimes now."

Merryweather not only promised compliance but declared that he would do everything in his power to shield his cousin, and when Dorothy Munroe re-appeared he made so many apologies, paid her so much attention, and listened to her with an air of such profound respect, that she very soon favoured him with a desultory lecture on Botany, Chemistry, Moral Philosophy, and many other things which it would require more space than we can allow to enumerate. How long she would have continued, it is impossible to say, had not Mr. Munroe and his daughter happened to leave the room when tea was removed, and had not Merryweather not only fallen fast asleep, but given audible proof of the fact just as Dorothy Munroe had come to the termination of a most lucid dissertation on the difference between testaceous and

crustaceous shells. Fortunately for Merryweather, Mr. Munroe, of whom his sister stood rather in awe, entered the room at this moment, and signified that it was time to retire for the night. She contented herself, therefore, with an angry glance, and retired apparently in great indignation, a circumstance Merryweather never became acquainted with, as Dorothy Munroe, however liable to a sudden ebullition of temper, was not in the habit of allowing the sun to go down upon her wrath, and by the converse of the same rule, that luminary upon rising the next morning, found her in as peaceful a frame of mind as if nothing had occurred on the previous evening, to disturb her serenity. Thus matters stood at Ulvacombe,—Dorothy Munroe favouring her nephew and niece alternately with her opinions, researches and observations, and occasionally diversifying the whole with one of those lively displays of temper, which she gave

Merryweather to understand, were at once a proof of delicacy of temperament and strength of mind.

CHAPTER V.

They lov'd : But such their guileless passion was,
As in the dawn of time inform'd the heart
Of innocence, and undissembling truth.
'Twas friendship heightened by the mutual wish,
Th' enchanting hope, and sympathetic glow,
Beam'd from the mutual eye. Devoting all
To love, each was to each a dearer self ;
Supremely happy in th' awakened power
Of giving joy.

Thomson's Seasons.

THE profound peace in which nature is
clothed on a fine summer's morning in
the country, the deep silence broken only

by the song of birds, the repose in which every object appears hushed before man is abroad and the busy hum of life is heard, impart to us the calm and hallowed feelings, which inspired the poet to exclaim—

“God made the country, man the town.”

Both Merryweather and his cousin were sensitively alive to the beauties of nature, and after his establishment at Ulvacombe on many such a morning, so soon as Aurora had flung open her gates, he and his cousin might have been seen, had not that dull god Morpheus weighed down the eyes of those who should have been wakeful, quaffing the fresh air in company as they either strolled on the verdant lawn, or skimmed over the surface of the lake, in a boat whose glistening sail caught the rays of the rising sun.

This, however, was not the only time that they were thrown together, for Mr. Munroe seldom made his appearance in

the drawing room, and the pursuits of their aunt Dorothy left her but little unoccupied time in the morning, a portion of the day which she generally spent in her own room. Merryweather and his cousin thus left to themselves, soon found that their tastes were similar in many respects, that poetry, music, and painting, were the delight of both, and it is not surprising, therefore, that as their intimacy increased, a deeper feeling than the friendship of connexions should have sprung up in their breasts, yet it stole upon them unconsciously, and it was not till an event occurred by which their lives were placed in imminent peril, that they became aware of the extent to which their affections were engaged.

One day when they were seated as usual in the drawing room, deeply immersed in their favourite Dante, Miss Dorothy Munroe made her appearance with a basket full of weeds and rubbish, and placing it on the table before her

nephew and niece, who were regarding it with looks of considerable alarm, not unmixed perhaps with disappointment at their studies being thus interrupted, said, "Here is something indeed precious. What can be more beautiful than that specimen of the *Hippuris Vulgaris*! I observe, however," she continued, "that you have not yet, Frank, turned your attention to this most interesting study, a circumstance more particularly to be regretted, as its captivating allurements would be an inexhaustible resource to you in many countries, which, from the nature of your profession, you will be obliged to visit. It is really a matter of amazement to me that you are not struck with this view of the question proleptically!"

"The only way in which it strikes me at present," said Merryweather, considerably out of temper, "is, that if the pursuit involves the necessity of diving into every dirty pool I may happen to pass, and of placing whatever I may

collect by such a process upon a table at which other people are seated to their great annoyance, it is one I should recommend everybody to avoid."

"No, no, aunt," said Constance, rising, and casting a reproachful glance at her cousin, "you do not annoy me, and I should like to hear about that specimen which you prize so much."

"It is of the class *Monandria*," said Dorothy Munroe, contenting herself with casting a look of triumphant disdain at her nephew. "On examination you will find that it has only one pistil. It is the first specimen of the kind that I have been able to procure, and will be a valuable addition to my collection."

"I must confess," said Merryweather, regretting his hastiness, "that my denunciations of botany were just then caused by a piece of that '*mares tail*,'—for really," he continued, with a very affable smile, "I must leave the more classical and refined term for those who are so

much more learned on the subject than myself;—falling over the leaf of the book which I am reading, and, as you may see, aunt, causing divers marks, which to a certain extent obliterate the type and spoil the appearance of the leaf. I propose, therefore, as we both have subjects for complaint, that we compromise the matter by a mutual forgiveness, which you shall testify by accompanying me in the boat to the rock on which that curious sea weed grows, when we will bring home as many baskets full of specimens as you like.”

“It will, indeed,” said Dorothy, elated at the idea, for she had frequently expressed a desire to visit this rock, but had never before met with any encouragement from her nephew— “It will indeed be productive of the most interesting results to me, as I shall be able to obtain several specimens of the class Cryptogamia, which as yet do not adorn my collection, and since I perceive a

newly awakened sympathy in you, my dear niece, for this beautiful science, I think you had better accompany us."

Constance having expressed her willingness to do so, they were quickly *en route* to the beach, where a boat, which Merryweather had purchased a day or two previously, at a neighbouring town, was in readiness for them.

To reach the sea shore, they had to descend a long flight of steps cut into the face of the perpendicular cliff, and flanked on the outside by a rude balustrade to protect the passenger. As they descended, the massive grandeur of the barren but stately cliff bounded their view on one side, while before them the broad expanse of ocean stretched far away to the distant horizon, its heaving and restless bosom, when viewed from that dizzy height, appearing almost calm, or as the surface of a lake just ruffled by a gentle breeze. The boat in which they were about to embark also, seemed

such a very cockle shell, as it rested upon the beach, that the idea of going to sea in anything so frail and diminutive would have struck those of the party who had not yet given it a closer inspection as preposterous, had not the figure of the man who stood close beside it, also appeared reduced to such a pigmy size, as to convince them of the deception which distance lent to the scene. Winding over the face of the cliff, they reached the white shingle which bestrewed the beach beneath, and the boat being speedily launched, and the wind favourable, they were soon bounding over the green waves towards the rock on which flourished the sea-weed so much prized by Dorothy Munroe.

The fineness of the day, however, induced the fairer portion of the party to propose a further trip, and Merryweather who had become an accomplished boatman while in Cornwall, instantly acceding to their request, stood

out to sea, till they had attained a distance of seven or eight miles from the shore, when the wind died away and left them completely becalmed. The heat now became excessive, and Merryweather in order to protect his freight from its effects, quickly rigged up a sort of temporary awning with a spare sail. Fishing lines were then produced, and while Dorothy Munroe busily employed herself in arranging her newly acquired treasures, and Constance read aloud a new publication which had been recently received from Town, Merryweather employed himself in ensnaring a few members of the finny tribe. Two or three hours thus passed rapidly away, when a low rumbling sound attracted their attention, Merryweather sprung up, pulled aside the awning and beheld with undisguised consternation the scene which presented itself. The heavens had assumed a most threatening appearance. A violent

storm was evidently near at hand, and a dark mass of clouds, which was rapidly rising in the opposite direction to that from which they had come, even while he gazed, gave forth another peal of thunder.

His first thought was to employ the best means at his disposal in encountering the danger, for he saw immediately that to avoid it was impossible. When, however, he looked upon his cousin, and upon the unfortunate Dorothy Munroe, who had already been seized with a panic, and had commenced bemoaning her unhappy fate in language which it passes our ingenuity to record, his heart sunk within him. But he was not one long to give way to feelings of a desponding character, and knowing that their safety depended entirely upon his exertions, he set about making preparations for the approaching struggle. Having stowed away the awning and made fast the ballast and everything

that could "fetch way," he stepped the smaller of the two masts forward, and secured it with backstays to enable it the better to sustain the great pressure to which it would be subjected when running before the wind. After reefing the small lug sail which belonged to this mast, he made fast the sheets, and pulling the head of the boat round, he went himself to the helm, first however depositing Dorothy Munroe at the foot of the mast, a position she was the more readily induced to occupy, by being informed that it was the safest place. His cousin he placed close to him, and all his arrangements having been completed, the whole party awaited with intense anxiety the approach of the tempest.

Not a breath of wind could yet be felt, and the boat was riding lazily over the gently heaving sea, as if partaking of the languid feeling which the heat of the day had produced on its occupants.

This inaction made them feel more acutely their critical position, and few perhaps could be more trying. They were out at sea in an open boat, with the certainty that a storm of no ordinary violence was about to assail them, from which even Merryweather was obliged inwardly to confess that their chance of escape was but small. Finding under these circumstances that his efforts to inspire a hope which he did not feel himself were of no avail, he gave up the attempt, and awaited in silence the fortune that was in store for them.

Darker and darker grew the heavens. The thunder at every successive peal became louder, and the massive clouds gradually encircled the whole expanse of the horizon. Immediately over them, the scud had the appearance of being the sport of tumultuous eddies, now driven with impetuous force in one direction, and then suddenly dispersed as some opposing gust stopped its

onward progress. The agitated appearance of the sea in the direction which from the first had appeared so threatening, now gave Merryweather notice that the time for action had arrived, a sign which he had not long observed, when a gust of tremendous force drove down upon their frail bark with winged speed. The boat staggered under the pressure, but the next moment as if endowed with life bounded forward at a rate which almost rivalled the sea gulls that hovered around. The rain poured down in almost unbroken streams, and a flash of lightning, so vivid as to leave behind it for some moments an appearance of complete obscurity, shot from a cloud immediately over them. This was followed by an oppressively loud peal of thunder, which rolling along the surface of the water was echoed back by the distant cliffs. The first burst of the storm over the wind continued blowing steadily though with un

diminished violence from the same quarter, which proved to Merryweather that there was now little chance of a sudden shift of wind, a danger which he had at first apprehended. The sea, however, was becoming more and more turbulent under the goading influence of its powerful agitator, and every wave that buoyed up the stern of their light boat, as with greater fleetness it passed them on its destined course, assumed a more threatening aspect than its predecessor. Thus in doubt and uncertainty they flew before the gale for about an hour, when Merryweather began anxiously to look out for the land, which he knew could not be far distant, though the torrents of hail and rain, as well as the general obscurity, concealed it from his view. Gradually the atmosphere before them assumed a denser appearance, and the cause of this change was soon apparent by the outline of the cliffs, at first becoming dimly traceable and then standing

forth in strong relief, as an invincible barrier to their further progress. To what part, however, of the coast the storm had driven them, or whether a landing could be effected, Merryweather was of course ignorant, and it could not but suggest itself to his mind, that perhaps after all his efforts, they were about to be cast against the face of the inhospitable cliff which rose before them.

"I would to heaven, Constance," said Merryweather, as this possibility occurred to him, "that you were seated in your own home at this moment. I could then look lightly upon the danger.—But Constance,—dear Constance, even if the worst should happen, this arm shall support you as long as its owner lives."

"I know," said Constance, looking with womanly confidence into his face, "that you would do everything in your power for my safety, but you must not forget, dear Frank, that there is another here equally entitled to your protection."

"God bless you, Constance," said Merryweather, deeply touched by her disinterestedness at a moment so full of danger, "and if other days are in store for us, I will ever sacredly treasure up your noble words. I wish though, more than I can express that you were safe at the present moment."

"And I," said Constance, who had watched with unbounded admiration the presence of mind and undaunted aspect of her cousin during the perilous events of the last hour, "wish to be nowhere but by your side."

"Constance," said Merryweather hurriedly, "this is no time to conceal our thoughts from each other. Whatever fate may be in store for us," he continued, as a peal of thunder made every plank in their boat quiver, "and though each moment threaten our lives, yet will I avow that it has been love, and love only that I have felt for you, and not the cold friendship of distant connexions. And

this love, unextinguishable by death, if death we must now meet, will rise, I trust, with the soul itself, superior to all corruption."

He seized her hand as he spoke, and glanced fondly into her face, and when she lifted her eyes to his, he was at no loss to understand their look of deep rooted affection.

As they approached nearer the cliff, Merryweather's worst surmises appeared about to be realized. A long line of breakers immediately before them became plainly visible, while the height to which the clouds of spray were driven into the air, as plainly showed, that some more formidable obstruction than a sandy shore opposed the encroaching power of the sea.

"I know where we are," said Merryweather, starting up and peering forward with intense eagerness. "There is an opening there in the rocks, which I went through the other day in calm weather,

but it is a desperate thing to attempt now. However, it is the only chance left."

Again he seated himself at the helm, and placing one arm round his cousin, steered directly for the narrow channel.

There was but little hope that anything of so fragile a nature as a boat could survive the tumult which raged within its narrow limits. As the huge billows fruitlessly expended their vast force upon the natural barriers around, they rushed through the apertures and chasms formed by their continued action with a power which nothing of a nature less impervious than the solid rocks could have withstood. The largest of these apertures was the one to which Merryweather steered, and once penetrated, their position would be one of safety, for although the rocks in most places lay wedged in close connection from their seaward extremity to the very foot of the cliffs that skirted the shore, yet here a

ledge served as a breakwater and within its boundary the water was comparatively smooth. There was little time for reflection, for, lifted on the summit of a gigantic wave, they were swept through the opening, but only to be hurled back again by the retreating waters. The stern of their boat was stove in and began rapidly to fill with water, when another wave, similar to the first, hurried them to the furthestmost end of the channel; and this time the undertow was not sufficiently strong to carry them back through its whole extent. The boat, in consequence, though nearly filled with water, once more became manageable, and they glided into the smooth basin, and touched the shore at the very moment when they were about to sink.

As soon as they found themselves safely landed, they spontaneously faltered their thanks to Heaven with sincere and deep-felt gratitude, when, after they had

FRANK MERRYWEATHER.

stood for some minutes gazing upon the raging ocean, Merryweather said—

“We must make haste and reach the end of this bay before the tide advances and shuts us in, for we shall appeal in vain to these merciless cliffs for protection.”

So saying, he gave one arm to Dorothy Munroe and the other to his cousin, and after casting a parting look of regret upon the gallant little craft which had borne them through so much peril, he led them swiftly towards the nearest of the two promontories that formed the bay, the rising tide already throwing a briny spray over the spot they had to pass.

They now readily found a path which led from the shore, and after pursuing it for some distance, they came to a farm house and were received by the inmates, at first, with frank hospitality and unaffected commiseration, and afterwards with a greater degree of respect, but less cordiality, when it became known that

they were the Ulvacombe party, for Mr. Munroe was far from being popular in the neighbourhood.

Their rough but honest host, however, did everything in his power to assist them. He belonged to that substantial class of farmers so frequently found in Devonshire, and being, amongst other chattels, the owner of a neat though rustic conveyance, which carried the good wife and her grown up daughters to church on Sundays, it was instantly placed at their disposal, and after thanking their entertainer they set off for Ulvacombe, which was about five miles distant.

On their arrival they found Mr. Munroe ignorant even of their absence from the house, but happening to pass through the hall as they entered, he did not omit to ask with surprise the cause of the unusual condition in which they appeared.

"My dear brother," said Dorothy, now recovered from her fright, and delighted at so favourable an opportunity

for display, "we have been surrounded by the perils which attend those whose business is on great waters. My indefatigable exertions to master every detail connected with that interesting science, botany, led me to accept the proffered escort of this our courageous deliverer, to a rock where some particular specimens of the class "Cryptogamia" can alone be procured in this neighbourhood. Tempted by the fineness of the weather, we proceeded further. The storm which has just past overtook us. Unable to cope with its violence we ran after it,"—

"Scudded before it," suggested Merryweather.

"Yes, such I suppose is the idiomatic phraseology of mariners, in which you must now, of course, be considered an adept, my dear Frank. We scudded before it. The thunder, the sea, and the boat rolled fearfully. All at once, as if by magic, we were amongst rocks. Hail, rain, foam, spray, lightning, and wind

raged around us, and the next minute I was unexpectedly standing upon the shore, repeating, I hope fervently, the form of prayer to be used at sea."

"Which was scarcely applicable under the circumstances, Dorothy," said Mr. Munroe, without relaxing a muscle of his countenance, "and perhaps it would have been as well," he continued, without offering the slightest congratulation to any of the party on their escape, "if with this statement you had coupled some expression of regret at having exposed my daughter to such danger."

"I am quite as much in fault as aunt Dorothy," said Constance, speaking with that diffidence which resulted from the general harshness of her sire. "We both wished to prolong our trip, and we owe our escape from the storm that overtook us to my cousin."

"Humph!" ejaculated Mr. Munroe, a look of extreme displeasure crossing his countenance. "At present," he con-

tinued, speaking generally, "my advice is, that you change your apparel before any evil consequences ensue."

"Abracadabra!" exclaimed Dorothy, placing herself in the van and leading the way upstairs. "A saying which you are doubtless aware, my dear nephew, was first promulgated in the dark ages as a charm against ague, and although at our time of life it might be deemed unnecessary,—even if the enlightened era in which we live had not removed all belief in its efficacy,—yet the word itself being easy of pronunciation, and taxing neither our time nor patience in its acquirement, we may as well give ourselves the benefit of any doubt that may exist on the subject, and if there should be any virtue in the expression reap the advantage that will accrue from its use."

So saying she opened the door of her apartment, and retired within its precincts to perform her mysterious toilet.

That evening when Merryweather joined the ladies in the drawing room after dinner, he found his cousin seated at her piano, which was near an open French window, and he placed himself quickly by her side. She sang his favourite melodies, and if occasionally she slightly trembled on the upper notes, yet as the exciting events of the day with all their dangers and associations crowded on her mind, her voice breathed a deeper feeling into the song.

The wind which had now subsided into a gentle breeze, rustled amongst the leaves, while it wafted towards them many a reminiscence of the rose, which clustered round the mansion. It is not surprising, under these circumstances, when Merryweather proposed a walk in the garden, that Constance should have acquiesced. Dangerous moments! How could they remain silent on the subject which so engrossed their thoughts, when everything in the scene around invited

them to throw off all reserve. The only sound that met their ear was the low murmur of the surf as it beat incessantly on the distant beach. High in the blue vault of Heaven rode the serene but haughty Empress of the night, her silvery rays infusing a brilliant light into the drops of rain that still hung upon the boughs, and casting upon the troubled surface of the distant ocean that broad bright track, which, to our imagination, seems best adapted for the transit from fairy land, of those elfin forms with which the graceful mythology of the northern nations has peopled their shores.

“Constance,” said Merryweather, as he pressed the hand that leant upon his arm, “you recollect what I said to-day when we were in the midst of such dangers?”

Constance thought she did, but was not sure. She was so frightened, she remembered that better than anything else.

"Then without recapitulating it," said Merryweather, smiling as he recalled the somewhat melodramatic speech he made under the excitement of the moment. "Tell me,—do tell me, Constance, if I may hope at some future time to call you by a dearer,—a far dearer name than that of cousin?"

Constance paused for a moment to still the beatings of her heart, and then answered with forced calmness, "You know I cannot, I must not promise, Frank. Be generous and do not ask me at present. Papa's anger would be greater than you can conceive, if he knew that we even thought of such a thing."

"I will not then, Constance," said Merryweather, "ask you to enter into any engagement, but listen to me for one minute. Wherever I may go, whatever may be my pursuits, neither time, nor distance, nor change of scene, nor the temptations, nor the trials of the world,

shall ever impair my love,—my deep love for you. It shall be my guide,—the goal to which all my plans, all my efforts shall tend. I will nourish it,—I will dwell upon it, and when we meet again, though my views on every other subject may have altered, though contact with the world may have dulled some of the early feelings of youth, yet this predominant one shall remain as bright and pure as at this moment. Surely then, dear Constance, I may ask if you will entirely cease to think of one, who will always love you so truly ? ”

“ Never !—never ! ” said Constance, in a low tone.

For the first time he pressed the lips that uttered these words with his own, and from that moment, both felt that they had been irrevocably swept into the vortex of that passion which confers so much happiness, and yet such misery upon its votaries. They thought not, however, of the future, and the happiest

moments of their lives were perhaps the present.

Remorseless time hastens not, nor delays the measured moments that fall from his hand for insignificant mortals. With the same stoical indifference and inexorable steadiness he looks upon the sufferings of the tortured wretch upon the rack and the lover's stolen interview, nor quickens his movements to assuage the sufferings of the one, or to prolong the fleeting happiness of the other. It is not therefore matter of wonder, that when the clock in the drawing room had twice sent forth its shrill notes into the night air as a warning to return, Constance and Frank should have thought the time had passed with incredible swiftness.

There is, too, a fatality in true love, and its course we know seldom runs clear, nor do the events we are bound to record in this truthful narrative form an exception to this general rule. The

following morning Mr. Munroe came down to the breakfast room with a large packet in his hand, endorsed "On Her Majesty's Service," in which was intimated Her Majesty's pleasure, that Frank Merryweather, gentleman, should obey and be obeyed as an ensign in her military service.

"I mentioned to Lord Carlbrook," said Mr. Munroe, after he had presented the 'despatch' to his nephew, "that you had a near relation at Bombay, and I perceive that this circumstance has induced him, with his usual kindness, to get you gazetted to the — th regiment, which, by the last 'Indian News,' was at Poona. They have only been in India a short time, therefore you must make up your mind to pass a few years in a foreign country. It is all in the way of service you know, and a soldier must not shrink from that. Although not in the army, I was out there thirty years."

"That 'indeed,'" said Merryweather, glancing at his cousin, and inwardly resolving, *coute qui coute*, that not a tenth part of that time should elapse before his return. "That indeed was a long banishment. But then, sir, you must remember that it will be in my power to exchange into another regiment, and therefore it does not necessarily follow that I shall be in India more than a year or two."

The latter part of this sentence Merryweather said as pointedly as he could, for he saw that his cousin had turned deadly pale, and was in violent agitation. Unable indeed longer to conceal it, she rose and left the room, when Mr. Munroe, who had not noticed his daughter's emotion, said,—

"A year or two! sir, a year or two! If you intend running about the world just as every whim strikes you, it is much to be regretted that my interest was employed in getting you a commission. Do you know that this

changing about from one regiment to another will do you more injury at the Horse Guards than aught else, and may eventually oblige you to resign? It is the fact," continued Mr. Munroe, perceiving an incredulous smile upon his nephew's countenance, "and I could tell you instances of it."

"Well sir," said Merryweather, changing his manner, "when I have had more experience, I have no doubt, I shall see these things in the same point of view as yourself. But there is now another subject which I wish to say a few words to you upon."

"Oh! about your money affairs. That shall be all arranged in as short a time as possible, and before you leave England."

"It is of more importance far than that."

"More importance!" exclaimed Mr. Munroe, inwardly drawing the conclusion that his nephew was partially demented.

"Yes, of infinitely more importance; and if in making the matter known to you I should not be quite coherent, you must attribute it to the excitement under which I speak. You must be aware, sir, that we, that is to say, your daughter (Mr. Munroe started) and myself have been left very much to each other's society since my arrival here?"

"Indeed, I know nothing of the sort," said Mr. Munroe, sharply.

"It is the fact, nevertheless," said Merryweather, "and I have resolved, before leaving Ulvacombe, to inform you of the consequences — we are engaged."

"Engaged!" said Mr. Munroe, aghast.

"I do not mean to say," continued Merryweather, "that any actual compact in words exists between us, on the contrary, sir, your daughter refused, without the consent of her parent, to make any such promise. But our

engagement is based upon far more durable grounds. It rests on the state of our own affections."

"What your reason may be," said Mr. Munroe, after looking with extreme dislike for some moments upon his nephew, "for favouring me with a confession of this very disinterested attachment, upon your part, I confess myself unable to discover. If, however, you imagine that my sanction will ever be given to anything so preposterous, you are vastly in error."

"Then I suppose," said Merryweather dejectedly, for this decisive reply had somewhat staggered him, "we have no resource but in hope."

"Hope," replied Mr. Munroe, rising and standing with his back to the fireplace, "when enlisted in a legitimate object, cannot be too carefully fostered, but when it is manifestly absurd to entertain it, any one who is not prepared to forfeit all claim to common

sense, will crush it in the bud. Therefore," he continued, assuming a patronizing manner, "I recommend you for your own peace of mind, instantly to banish all thoughts of, what I will call, this boyish fancy."

"But you would not," said Merryweather dubiously as he glanced at Mr. Munroe, "force the inclinations of your daughter?"

"I am more inclined," said Mr. Munroe in the same patronizing manner, "to endeavour to convince you of your folly, than disposed to find fault with what you say, however unbecoming it may be, and as I think that to produce this result the most efficacious way will be to convince you that the hand of my daughter is far beyond what you can ever hope to aspire to, I will enter into explanations, which my interest for your welfare alone induces me to do. My daughter, sir, will inherit a large fortune. My daughter, sir, pos-

sesses the same personal attractions which placed her mother at the head of this house, and therefore it is confidently expected by her family that she will some day enter the very highest ranks of society."

"In other words," said Merryweather, "it is confidently expected by her family, that she will sacrifice all her own inclinations, in order to secure the possession of that which can never afford her one moment's happiness. However, sir, I can assure you, that though Miss Munroe will never enter into any matrimonial engagement without your sanction, yet it is equally certain that she will never give her hand where she cannot bestow her affections, and these are already engaged. The confidence with which I speak may in some measure open your eyes to the real state of the case ; and in dropping the subject, let me assure you that my own feelings, will ever remain unaltered."

"The meaning of which assertion," said Mr. Munroe, his lip quivering with anger, "is, that you have resolved, if it be in your power, to maintain the influence that you have secretly acquired, by the most despicable means, over the mind of a mere child. But you will find that young gentlemen are not always so clever as they imagine themselves to be. And now, sir, since your presence is no longer desired in this house, you will be pleased to leave it immediately. Here," he continued, drawing a card from his pocket as he was leaving the room, "is the direction of some lodgings which I have engaged for you in town. I will moreover give you a letter of introduction to Captain Blakeney, an officer who has been in India, and who will, I have no doubt, give you the benefit of his advice in procuring whatever is necessary before your departure from England. Whether to call upon Mrs.

Mackintosh or not, is a matter on which you can exercise your own judgment; but since you have already evinced so much confidence in it, my advice would of course be superfluous, and I shall not therefore offer any. I have merely to add that my carriage will be ready in an hour."

So saying he quitted the room, and Merryweather was left to his meditations.

These soon brought him to the conclusion that he had just done a very indiscreet thing, and that the mischief being irreparable, all that remained was to get ready for his departure. This was soon accomplished, and his luggage having been taken down to the lodge, and a correspondence arranged between his guardian and himself, he had no excuse for tarrying longer. Still, however, he lingered with the hope of being able to say adieu to his cousin, but in this he was destined

to be disappointed, for Mr. Munroe was on the alert and his precautions were too well taken. On leaving the house, however, he saw a handkerchief waved from the window of his cousin's boudoir. He kissed his hand in return, and not daring to trust himself with another look, he strode onwards to the lodge, under a sense of the deepest depression.

CHAPTER VI.

They take religion in their mouth ;
They talk o' mercy, grace, an' truth,
For what ? to gie their malice skouth
 On some puir wight ;
An' hunt him down, o'er right an' ruth,
 To ruin streight.
All hail religion ! maid divine !
Pardon a muse sae mean as mine,
Who, in her rough imperfect line,
 Thus daurs to name thee ;
To stigmatize false friends of thine,
 Can ne'er defame thee.

Burns's Poems.

THE day after Merryweather's arrival in town, he proceeded to Captain Blakeney's residence, but not finding him at home,

left his card and the letter of introduction he had received from Mr. Munroe, with the servant. Towards the latter end of the day a note was delivered to him from that gentleman, expressing his regret at having been away from home when Merryweather called, and containing a request that he might have the pleasure of meeting him at the house of Mrs. Mackintosh in Eton Place, in the course of the evening. Merryweather accordingly at about nine o'clock drove up to the door, and was forthwith shown into a drawing room, furnished in the most costly manner. As there was no one in the room, he had ample time to make his observations, and amongst other things to look into some of the handsomely bound books arranged round the table. They were of an exceedingly serious turn, and he read successively the titles. "The rod gently administered;" "The rod sharply administered;" "Comforting food for the sick sinner;" "A barbed

fork to stir up a lazy conscience;" "Fastenings for a Backslider;" and several others of the same remarkable tenor.

Just as he had arrived at the conclusion that they were not the kind of books he should much care to peruse, Captain Blakeney and Mrs. Mackintosh, entered, and the former stepping up to Merryweather with rather a studied politeness of manner, expressed the pleasure it gave him to make the acquaintance of one whose father, he, in common with his other friends, had estimated so highly. "Let me" continued Captain Blakeney "introduce—but I mistake,—you must surely remember Mrs. Mackintosh?"

Merryweather explained that so many years had intervened since he was under her maternal control, that he was obliged to confess that Mrs. Mackintosh, in all but in name, had faded from his recollection.

"Ah, I suppose so," replied Captain Blakeney, "but you are most fortunate in having the opportunity of again making her acquaintance. I speak from experience,—her worth is inappreciable!"

"You should not, Captain Blakeney, raise expectations which can never be realised," said Mrs. Mackintosh, after shaking hands with Merryweather. "I am but a weak vessel, little able to do any good thing, and though I am never weary of trying, yet it is seldom that I accomplish all that my desire for the welfare of others bids me attempt."

"But if you attempt much, madam, and perform but a tithe," said Merryweather, seating himself in obedience to a motion from Mrs. Mackintosh, "that tithe may be considerable."

"Oh no, Mr. Merryweather, I will not call it considerable, because it falls so far short of what I would wish it to be,—falls short of what I have seen others perform. It is true that my humble

efforts have sometimes been attended with success, but it is not for me to speak of them; they are recorded I trust elsewhere. Have you ever turned your thoughts to serious subjects?"

"Very frequently, madam," replied Merryweather.

"How refreshing to hear the young say this with sincerity. Let one who has gone through much trial and affliction, entreat you, for your own sake, to keep in this frame of mind, and never to allow the merry and the gay to allure you to seek for happiness anywhere but in secret meditation. Nights of weeping and days of mourning are such healthful preparations for the duties and avocations of life, and so subdue to meekness and resignation the proud heart of man, that those who avail themselves of these privileges, experience, it is not perhaps presumptuous to say, a foretaste of paradise."

"You never I suppose read any books but such as I see upon your table?" asked Merryweather.

"They principally employ my leisure hours," was the reply.

"Then you are unacquainted with the works of Mr. ——— and Mr. ———?"

"I have read the latter's 'Travels in the Holy Land,' replied Mrs. Mackintosh, "but I have since heard that he has published other works of a light, not to say immoral tendency. Such productions I would not look at for all that this world can offer, and I hope and trust they are equally far from ever engaging your attention."

"On the contrary," replied Merryweather, "I am bound to confess that I have read most of the works they have written with delight, frequently with instruction, and I must say that I have never found anything approaching to immorality in any of them. Those works are immoral in which it is

sought so to clothe vice that it may please the eye and corrupt the heart. No such attempt is made by the authors I have mentioned. They paint men as they find them. They hold up a looking glass to crime, in which it may see its own hideous visage, and so completely rend the veil of hypocrisy from the impostor as to make him a laughing stock to the world; or, on the other hand, they draw pictures on the brighter side of human nature, which, if sometimes too highly coloured, are nevertheless in most cases beautiful creations, such as soften the feelings and make us more charitable in our dealings with others. No one surely would accuse Hogarth of immorality for producing those inimitable Pictures, in which licentiousness is so represented as to make even the vitiated recoil from its false charms; and yet much the same spirit, I think, prevails in the works you condemn. They are drawn with the pen it is true, instead of

the pencil, but with equal dexterity, and they are as true to life."

"Mr. Merryweather — Mr. Merryweather, it is quite fearful to hear you ! I trust the opinions you have put forward are not your settled convictions, but that you may still be brought to acknowledge their sinful tendency and become one of the flock. Pray let me give you 'The rod sharply administered.' If it produces the effect I anticipate, you will then be in a fit state to receive 'The soothing balm for the wounds of affliction,' of which I will also beg your acceptance."

"I thank you much," said Merryweather, gently pushing the books away from him, "but I beg to decline them. My dislike of such works is greater than I can express. I do not pretend to know the object for which they are written, but I can tell you the effect they produce on my mind. It is one of sorrow that there should be found men who can attempt by such means, however vainly,

to detract from the sublimity of the gospel they profess to teach. If they are so anxious to become authors, there are many subjects which claim their attention. But no. Here is one that they know will secure a certain amount of circulation, and thus every impostor who can turn up his eyes, and in a sepulchral tone of voice talk of 'the world' as of something with which he has no connection whatever, pesters society with the trash, pardon the expression, you recommend me. In all of them it is sought to terrify the reader by the punishments that are stated to be waiting for him, or he is favoured with a sickly and mawkish sentimentality which is absolutely loathsome, and a cruel mockery of the high authority which it pretends to vindicate."

"Oh! my young friend, you are on the brink of ruin!" exclaimed Mrs. Mackintosh. "The very strongest remedies are necessary for your case. Pray let me entreat you to read this tract."

Merryweather glanced at the title of the pamphlet that was handed to him across the table, and his eye encountered in letters an inch high, the rather startling query, 'Young man, do you know you are close to hell?' Refraining from any further observation, and subduing the disgust that arose in his mind, he placed it on the top of the other books which he had rejected, and said, "I see plainly that we should never understand each other;" and then turning to Captain Blakeney in order to end the discussion, he continued—"My uncle tells me that you have been in India, and you will not, perhaps, refuse me the benefit of your experience and advice in procuring whatever is requisite for so long a voyage."

"Certainly, I shall be most happy," replied Captain Blakeney, "but do you not go over-land?"

"I was thinking of going round the Cape," said Merryweather, "for I am very partial to the sea."

"In that case I should recommend you to trust yourself to the tender mercies of an outfitter. They are gifted with the most retentive memories, which certainly do not fail them when they are making out their accounts, but they are a set of fellows whose services are invaluable on such an occasion. I well remember that during a voyage, which, from having the wind without a moment's intermission dead in our teeth, except when it blew from some other quarter, extended over six months; I never once fancied I should like anything, but it was discovered in some unknown recess. I often thought that the whole of London must have been squeezed into those six bullock trunks."

"Captain Blakeney!" exclaimed Mrs. Mackintosh, holding up her finger warningly.

"Well, such was frequently my impression, I assure you, but our amiable friend, if she will allow us to call her so,"

continued Captain Blakeney, addressing Merryweather, "has such exquisitely sensitive feelings and is gifted with such a high sense of morality, that she dislikes the slightest appearance of exaggeration, even when it is only used figuratively by way of illustration. I have frequently seen her very uneasy when people have casually mentioned such fabulous animals as unicorns and dragons, because as there never were such creatures, she considers it a violation of the truth to speak of them as if they had ever existed. Such is her sensitiveness!"

"Prodigious!" exclaimed Merryweather, laughing at what he conceived a joke of Captain Blakeney's.

"Yes! let the world laugh!" said Mrs. Mackintosh, with every appearance of enthusiasm. "Let the World scoff! The World has always done so and will, it is to be feared, continue to do so. But there are those who know what the World is,—who shrink from its contami-

nating touch, and are proud when they have merited its jeers. Such people are enveloped in a case of such impenetrable sanctity, that the World's assaults move them no more than the wind moves the solid rock, and if they ever think of the worldly, it is with sorrow and compassion."

"There, I told you so," said Captain Blakeney, fixing his eyes on the ceiling. "It is quite a pleasure to hear her," he added, while he fanned himself with, "The Barbed Fork."

"Is it so?" said Mrs. Mackintosh, with a dubious sigh. "I wish I could benefit as well as please, those who hear me. Our young friend, I fear, is not prepared to afford me this delight. But yet I will endeavour to sow good seed in his mind, and I trust that though it may now lay dormant, it will nevertheless in the time to come shoot up, and in spite of the weeds that at present usurp the soil, yield an abundant crop. Then oh! my beloved young brother, let me arouse

you! Pray shake off dull sleep and slothful indifference. Open your eyes, look around you and start! Is it not better that you should awake of your own accord than wait till some heavy calamity, which may be close upon you, and will overtake you unless you repent in time, dispels with fearful suddenness your quiet slumbers? Oh! I remember to have seen an infant tossing its innocent limbs from side to side in all the luxuriance of repose, a smile dimpling its cheek whilst its cherub lips ever and anon unconsciously called for its proud and happy mother, and Oh! I had not long looked on this bright and pleasing vision when the side of the cot gave way, and the child rolled with deafening screams to the ground. No longer was its countenance radiant with smiles, but from its mouth, now opened far and wide, nature called loudly for assistance. And Oh! for words to express my delight, when I found that it had not been

injured ! No, it had only been aroused. And such, my dear young friend, may be your case, but do you hope like the blessed infant to escape unhurt ? Ah, no. Believe me you will not. Therefore be aroused at once. Oh Arouse ! Arouse !!

“ Well, Madam,” said Merryweather, rising to depart, “ I thank you very much for the interest you take in my spiritual welfare, but I will not encroach any longer upon your time, particularly after the useful manner in which you tell me it is employed. I will now wish you good evening.”

“ One request you must grant me,” said Mrs. Mackintosh with fervour.

“ I will endeavour to comply with it,” said Merryweather hesitatingly, as a variety of absurd propositions flashed across his mind.

“ Then it is to take these books for your own private perusal, and this bundle of tracts to distribute amongst the natives in India.”

"I have already declined those books, Madam," replied Merryweather. "I beg you will not force me to appear discourteous; and as for the tracts, I think it will appear to you on consideration, that being written in English, they would scarcely be understood by Hindoos. I wish you good evening," and so saying Merryweather beat a precipitate retreat, muttering as he descended the stairs, "I always thought my poor aunt was the greatest fool in the world, but this woman is ten thousand times worse."

No sooner did the closing of the street door announce to Captain Blakeney that Merryweather had left the house, than he threw himself upon one of the sofas and with a burst of laughter, in which, however, there was little real merriment, exclaimed, "Well, that was not so bad, but he has taken none of those pretty little books away with him, has he Mrs. Mackintosh?"

"Of course," was the reply, "you will now commence turning everything that is serious into ridicule. That I expect. I should indeed be astonished if *you* could admire anything of the kind."

"Oh, dear yes, I do!" said Captain Blakeney, with a sarcastic smile. "I admire exceedingly your manner of dealing with such subjects—the astonishing facility with which you contrive to cultivate spiritual thoughts without ever neglecting your worldly interests, which, to say the least, are in your case of such a nature as to impose upon you the necessity of not being very scrupulous. Not admire! Believe me, a mind so formed becomes a most interesting study, and shows that the most contradictory feelings can be cherished and even enjoyed at one and the same time. People who had not witnessed the phenomenon might be afraid of their clashing, but so cleverly do you contrive

to adjust matters, that, upon my word, their harmonious action is truly wonderful. Not admire! I assure you that my admiration is unbounded."

Mrs. Mackintosh listened to these remarks without making any reply, although she well understood their meaning. But the cloak that is first put on to deceive others, eventually hides from the wearer the defects around which it is thrown. The impostor, who carries his hand in a sling whilst imploring alms, and carefully guards the uninjured member from coming in contact with the passer by, finds that at night, even in the midst of low and riotous scenes, he is unable to free himself from the impression that it requires his care. Infinitely stronger are such impressions when the fraud has to be sustained by continual exertions of the mind, which, growing weary of supporting an assumed character, at last yields

obedience to outward observances, and fashions itself to the deceit it is perpetually called upon to practise. Mrs. Mackintosh had arrived at this happy state of self-delusion. She was an impostor in every sense of the word. She knew that she had neither right nor show of right to the property she was at present enjoying, and that she had acquired it entirely by means of a forged document. Yet, she had contrived so completely to palliate this transaction in her own eyes, and had moreover so habituated herself to an outward observance of what she termed her religious duties,—though at first they were performed for the purpose of warding off the suspicion which attached to her,—that even Captain Blakeney himself, found it difficult sometimes to recognise in her his accomplice in fraud. It was in some such state of bewilderment, that after a few minutes silence he observed,—“That

young Merryweather is a shrewd sort of fellow, and should he by any chance ever get a clue to the manner in which he was relieved of his property, I venture to say he will never rest till he unravels the whole matter. I do not say that this is likely, or even possible to happen; but supposing such a case, I am very much afraid, my dear Mrs. Mackintosh—I really am very much afraid, that he would scarcely give you credit for sincerity in reading him that delightful little lecture this evening.”

“Then he would wrong me,” said Mrs. Mackintosh, solemnly.

“You would have some difficulty, I fear, in convincing him of that; for he would naturally think, that however well inclined you might be to set him right in the next world, you were certainly wronging him in this.”

“I?” exclaimed Mrs. Mackintosh. It is not my doing. I was led into

it and found afterwards that the step was irrevocable. Besides it was so ordained, or it could not have happened, and I rejoice to think that I have been made the instrument of doing good to others, for I contribute largely, as you are aware, to the missionary funds, which would not be aided by the young man we have just seen."

"I have no doubt," said Captain Blake-ney, "that you apply his funds for him in a most conscientious manner, and really, so long as no diminution in my income takes place, I am far from having any objection to this disinterested expenditure. I can only hope that our arrangements may continue to be made in the same amicable manner as hitherto, and that this young stripling will not hear anything in India prejudicial to our interests. But faugh! There was not a scrap of writing to be found, and it is almost impossible that anything can come to light after so many years. You need be under no apprehension."

"Whatever were to happen I should feel quite resigned to the will of Providence," said Mrs. Mackintosh meekly. "My only fault has been want of sufficient firmness,—a fault which I cannot repent, since it has been productive of such beneficial results to the Heathen in foreign lands. The part you have played, Captain Blakeney cannot, I fear, be looked upon with equal indulgence. I do not however wish to judge between us. Society will do that in case of anything transpiring."

"Why, you see," returned Captain Blakeney, settling himself more comfortably on the sofa, "there would be a slight difficulty in proving that I was in any way concerned in the matter. I do not put this forward as a menace, but merely state it as a fact. However, there is no use," he continued after a pause, "in imagining what we should do under circumstances that can never occur. There are many ways in which our time

can be more profitably employed, so I will leave you to the quiet enjoyment of the pursuits in which you delight, whilst I adjourn to the dining room to finish the glass of claret which young Merryweather's arrival compelled me to leave."

Mrs. Mackintosh sighed and said something about keeping our appetites under subjection, but with apparently not much effect, for Captain Blakeney quitted the room without further remark, and she was left to ruminate alone over the duties of the morrow.

CHAPTER VII.

But where to find that happiest spot below,
Who can direct when all pretend to know ?
The shuddering tenant of the frigid zone
Boldly proclaims that happiest spot his own ;
Extols the treasures of the stormy seas,
And his long nights of revelry and ease :
The naked negro, panting at the line,
Boasts of his golden sands and palmy wine,
Basks in the glare, or stems the tepid wave,
And thanks his gods for all the good they gave.
Such is the patriot's boast where'er we roam,
His first, best country ever is at home.

Goldsmith's Traveller.

MERRYWEATHER had in accordance with
Captain Blakeney's advice, given his
instructions to one of those accomodating

people, whose intimate acquaintance with the wants of their fellow men, enable them to supply the traveller with an outfit, comprising everything that can possibly be required during a long voyage, and was debating how he could best employ the few weeks that remained to him before leaving England, when one day, happening to pass through Leadenhall street, he saw his old school-fellow, Somerville, coming out of the India House. Their meeting was cordial in the extreme, and after the first demonstrations of pleasure had a little subsided, they began to discuss their future prospects. Although they had occasionally corresponded, Merryweather now heard for the first time that his friend was going out to India, an opportunity of obtaining a cadetship having unexpectedly occurred, of which his family had taken advantage. The choice of the two presidencies, Bombay or Madras, having been offered to him, he was, at Merry-

weather's earnest solicitation, induced to choose the former, and they thereupon agreed so to time their departure as to enable them to sail for their destination in the same ship. This arrangement having been made, Merryweather readily accepted an invitation to pass the remainder of the time before leaving England with Somerville, and they accordingly went together to the latter's residence in the country. As usual with those who are about to make a long pilgrimage into a distant land they were kindly and hospitably received by all whom they visited. Every one moreover had an advice to give them. A gentleman, whose experience in nautical matters, had been acquired between Dover and Calais, strongly recommended his panacea for sea sickness. Another, who had just risen from a perusal of Mills' History of British India, thought they could not do better than take His Grace the Duke of Wellington as their model, and endeavour,

on the first convenient opportunity, to rival the military renown acquired by that far-famed chief at the battle of Assaye. A third had convinced himself by a long and painful process of deductive reasoning, that Mulligatauny soup, curry powder, Chutney sauce, and iced champagne are the true enemies of the British constitution in India, and that the plain dictates of common sense manifestly required that the European who visited the country of the Hindoo, should conform to the habits of the latter, and adopt a rice diet. We are bound in candour to admit that although this varied advice was listened to with patience and submission by our Hero and Somerville, it made little impression upon them, for independently of its intrinsic value, their minds were engrossed with one paramount idea,—their approaching banishment from their native land.

Time flies ! If this be the impression of its fleetness made by the absorbing in-

terest of the ordinary events of life, some infinitely more expressive term must be invented to convey an idea of its movements, when home, surrounded by all the bright hopes which the imagination of youth loves to paint, is about to be exchanged for a long exile in a foreign land. Somerville was more sensitively alive to these feelings than Merryweather, for the latter, as already mentioned, had determined not to remain in India longer than three years. But three years! or even two! He looked back upon the last two years he had passed at school, and they appeared to him an age. He had yet to learn that every succeeding year in a man's life passes more quickly than the one preceding it. The occurrences of each day in the mean time appeared to flit as quickly before them as the ever varying phases of a Kaleidoscope, and it was almost with a feeling of wonder, that at the expiration of a couple of months, they found themselves standing

upon the deck of the Indiaman which was to convey them to Bombay.

Merryweather had completely underrated the trial of leaving home. The excitement created by the preparations for his departure, the novelty of his situation, and the intuitive feeling which urges us to shrink from the contemplation of approaching pain, by forcing the mind to take an interest in passing occurrences, had tended much to distract his thoughts and divert his attention from an event which had become inevitable. But when the shores of England grew dim in the distance, and he pictured to himself the many unforeseen accidents which time and absence might produce, a morbid feeling of despondency took possession of his mind, and his actual position seemed the hallucination of some hideous dream converted into a reality. Every person, that he could recall to mind in the loved land now quickly fading from his view, became for the

moment an object of envy, for he enjoyed what seemed the greatest of earthly blessings,—a residence in his own country, open to all the aspirations which give social happiness and vitality to man, and surrounded by all the associations, without which, life is a dreary blank, a hollow artificial state of existence.

Such were the thoughts of our Hero, as he gazed out of one of the stern windows of the Indiaman, but from this train of ideas he was suddenly roused by a violent noise in his cabin, and he gradually became aware that a large sea chest, which the foresight of his outfitter had provided for his use during the voyage, was skipping about in a lively manner, and threatening destruction to itself and to all who approached it. To secure this waif became an immediate necessity, and his attention being directed to the fact that his personal comfort would be much promoted by checking the propensity which his moveables had

acquired to change their position with the unceasing motion of the ship, he summoned the necessary assistance, and soon gave his quarters such an air of comfort, as to induce him internally to acknowledge, that there might be more objectionable places in the world than one of the principal cabins of an India-man of twelve hundred tons.

The incidents of an Indian voyage in general vary but little. On this occasion there was the average amount of storms in the atmosphere, and amongst the passengers; these occurrences forming the standing phenomena of a passage round the cape, and the latter in particular being apparently as necessary as spreading the canvass to the wind, or letting the anchor drop on arrival in port. Without, therefore attempting to record that to which we should probably fail to do justice, let us at once transport our hero to Bombay harbour.

Almost the first person who then came on board was Mr. Ponsonby, the uncle of Merryweather, for whom he instantly made enquiries. This gentleman was attired in very loose trousers, and an enormous shooting coat, both made of jean and as white as snow. A piece of black ribbon round his shirt collar served as an apology for a cravat. He encumbered himself with no vest, wore shoes, and a wide-awake hat, over which was a quilted white cover, thick enough to protect him from the rays of the sun. His age was about fifty, though a long residence in a tropical climate gave him a much older appearance. His complexion partook strongly of the colour of saffron, but there was a goodnatured expression in his countenance, and a great deal of shrewdness in the twinkle of his little grey eye.

"Very glad indeed to see you, nephew," said Mr. Ponsonby, holding out his hand to Merryweather.

"And I have long looked forward," said Merryweather, cordially grasping his uncle's hand, "to the pleasure of becoming acquainted with one who has been so kind to me."

"Never mind that now," said the old gentleman, evidently much delighted, "Make haste and get your kit over the side, and come ashore. You have been cooped up in a ship long enough. Who was that, by the way, to whom you were talking when I first saw you?"

"An old schoolfellow of mine whom I think I have mentioned in my letters. His name is Somerville, and he is a cadet in the Company's service."

"Oh, ho! Arcades ambo! Griffins both; eh?" said Mr. Ponsonby. "Bring him along with you. I daresay I can manage to give him a 'shake down' as we old Indians call it."

Somerville having been introduced to Mr. Ponsonby, readily accepted the offer of a "shake down," and the whole party

were therefore quickly seated with a countless number of packages, in a boat which soon deposited them at the custom house. A few silver coins administered to the itching palms of the officials, procured the transmission of their baggage without the annoyance of a search, and three palanquins forthwith conveyed the whole party to the bungalow of Mr. Ponsonby, which was situated on the Esplanade, facing the sea.

"You'll find it cooler here than in those palanquins," said Mr. Ponsonby, throwing himself into a seat in the verandah, behind a large screen made of Cuscus grass, and inviting his guests to do the same.

"You certainly have little to complain of here, Uncle," said Merryweather, glancing round the well furnished rooms, in which there was a profusion of every luxurious appliance that ingenuity could devise to minister to ease and promote comfort, "and as to heat, why all the

cool breezes in the country are I should think imprisoned here; and what a delicious perfume is imparted by those screens!"

"Well they *are* a great comfort," said Mr. Ponsonby, "and do their work well enough. You see they are hung up all round the verandah, and effectually keep off the glare of the sun. Then I have a couple of Bearers watering them, so as to keep the grass well saturated and the breeze passing through them when in this state, not only imparts the pleasant fragrance you noticed just now to the atmosphere, but keeps every room in the Bungalow cool. People say, you know, that the separation between India and his Satanic Majesty's dominions, is as transparent as a Benares turban! Now granting this to be the case, I own that I prefer interposing something less pervious to heat between them and my person, and long experience has taught me that a little wet grass damps the ardour of that august

personage more than anything else. But I had nearly forgotten,—Qui Hai!”

“Sahib!” replied a turbaned black servant with great gravity, suddenly appearing from some recess where he would have remained perfectly quiet for hours had not his services been required.

“*Beer lao!*”

“*Sahib baraf hona?*” said this functionary with still greater gravity, a slight movement of his lips, and the sound of a voice proceeding from the direction where he stood, being the only indications that he was speaking.

“Albatta,” said Mr. Ponsonby.

“Achha sahib” again replied the automaton with increased gravity, and disappearing in the same noiseless manner with which he had made himself visible.

“May I ask,” said Merryweather, laughing, “if the mission you have just despatched that solemn personage upon involves the fate of our Eastern Empire,

because his manner is that of a man burdened with mighty secrets?"

"You will have an opportunity of judging for yourself," replied Mr. Ponsonby, and at this moment the black servant re-appeared, bearing a silver salver, on which were a couple of bottles of pale ale, a crystal vase full of ice, and three tumblers.

"This is the important business he had to transact," continued Mr. Ponsonby, "but notwithstanding his stoical appearance, I would venture to say that he is listening attentively to every word that falls from us, and although I have never heard him utter an English word, yet I would hazard long odds that he understands our language just as well as I do Hindustani. Ah, you need not try to read his countenance, these fellows have a great deal too much face to betray what is passing in their minds. *Nani ka pani tayar karo, dono sahib ke waste !*" continued Mr. Ponsonby to the

native attendant, who instantly withdrew. "I have ordered some baths to be got ready for both of you, for I well remember what a luxury it is to have a plentiful supply of fresh water after a long voyage. But come,—try some beer, you will find this the favourite beverage in India, and taken in moderation a very wholesome one, though not so if two dozen bottles be drunk in one day; a feat I once heard a person boast of having performed."

"That certainly is delicious," said Merryweather, setting down a glass in which the transparent lumps of ice which had recently floated on the surface of the chilled beverage now formed a cool mass at the bottom of the tumbler, "but I do not think my partiality for it would ever induce me to put myself to the inconvenience the person you speak of must have suffered."

"No. That was a feat highly disgusting in itself and quite worthy, I am sorry

to say, of the person who accomplished it. But I was only waiting, Frank, for that black fellow to leave us, to tell you that he was once your father's servant, and that this is the sole reason why I have allowed him to remain with me, for I believe him to be as arrant a thief as there is in the world."

"My father's servant!" exclaimed Merryweather.

"Yes. He was with him in his last campaign, and from all accounts served him well, and according to their notions, faithfully, for it appears that he was much attached to him. This is not at all unfrequent with these natives, though at the same time the difference between *meum* and *tuum* being very apt to escape their memories, they frequently appropriate what does not belong to them. The first mentioned trait however, is certainly a very redeeming point, and considering the universal disregard of principle in the East, it would not perhaps be

fair to judge individuals by too high a standard of morality."

"Do the natives like our rule?" asked Somerville.

"Well, the great mass of the population have, it appears to me, ceased to think about it. New generations have sprung up since we began to govern the country, who are accustomed to our presence amongst them, and since we never interfere with any of their religious prejudices, they are as contented to let us govern them as any one else. I have no doubt however, that amongst the higher order of Hindoos, there is an *arrière pensée*, that after all we are but Pariahs—clever Pariahs it may be,—but nevertheless a very degraded set of people when compared with themselves. I have also frequently heard some of the Mussulmans express a regret that their rulers are not of the 'faithful;' but these trivial discontents are wholly unimportant under the circumstances, for the difference

of caste entirely prohibits any combination for political purposes, unless indeed some such misgovernment as that which has commonly prevailed in our other colonies, were to force the people to lay aside their prejudices and compel them to act in concert. But so long as the Company is suffered to retain its present power, I hold this to be almost impossible, for the Direction is composed of men who have passed the greater part of their lives in India, and they are fully aware of the effect their measures will produce. It would be but bad policy I think to curtail their privileges, for there would probably be wanting, in an English parliament, that practical knowledge of the country which is so essential to the proper administration of its affairs; and I moreover very much doubt if any government of her Majesty's could spare enough time, or any section of her government sufficiently abstract its ideas from the numerous important questions that daily come

under discussion, to prevent the affairs of India falling into confusion. I do not however mean to give the company more than their due. They are much blamed, and to a certain extent with justice, for not developing the resources of the country, and improving the condition of the people. Their system of taxation moreover is, I conceive susceptible of much improvement. At present it presses so heavily upon the Agriculturist, or 'Ryots,' as we call them, that not only are they entirely without capital, but in many districts it is with the greatest difficulty that they can obtain a livelihood by their daily toil. Then again the various appliances of the labourers and the means of transition for articles of native growth are much in the same primitive state as in the days of Aurungzebe. As you proceed up the country, you will see the cotton coming down from the districts in which it is grown, packed on the backs of jaded and

foot-sore animals, that travel at the average rate of a mile and a half an hour, along,—I was about to say, the road,—but rather along tracks that are frequently intersected by nullahs several feet deep, and which in wet weather are perfectly impassable.”

“And what success,” said Merryweather, “attends the efforts of the missionaries? You will be surprised to hear that I was requested by Mrs. Mackintosh to take out some tracts, and distribute them amongst the natives!”

“None whatever. That they do occasionally make converts is unquestionable, but chiefly of disreputable characters, whose bad conduct has brought them into disgrace with their own caste. I firmly believe that you might, at present, as well try and persuade the Archbishop of Canterbury to worship Seeva and Vishnu, as a respectable Hindoo to become a Christian. But you surprise

me! Surely it was not Mrs. Mackintosh who made this request?"

"It was indeed," replied Merryweather.

"Then she has seen fit to add hypocrisy to her other virtues. But I suppose Mr. Munroe gave you a full and circumstantial account of all her proceedings when she was in this country?"

"On the contrary," replied Merryweather, "he was always so uncommunicative upon all subjects, and invariably assumed so wearied and injured a look whenever I spoke to him, that had it not been for your letters, I fear I should have remained lamentably unconscious of her worth."

"Yes," replied Mr. Ponsonby, his eyes twinkling with redoubled brilliancy, "She is an artful, intriguing, dishonest—but bah! It is no use getting into a heat, particularly in this climate; though I will say this, that if she obtained the property which rightly belongs to

you by fair means, I will throw myself under the wheels of the first Juggernath car I see."

The native servant now reappeared, and informed Merryweather and Somerville that the baths were in readiness. They therefore quitted their host for the present and proceeded to the performance of their toilet. Oh, the delight, of a bath in India! No footpans here with the water an inch or two deep. A large receptacle is daily filled by an industrious "Bheastie" for the enormous pay of four rupees a month! Then there is no need as in England of oil cloth and matting to prevent the water trickling through the floor and spoiling the drawing room ceiling. The bathroom is always on a level with the ground, and carefully covered with chunam—a cement which takes the polish of marble,—while a small parapet around prevents any little rebellious streams from running off into directions where

they ought not to go. In this reservoir revel till you are out of breath! and then if you are not refreshed, there must be something radically wrong in your constitution.

Merryweather had enjoyed to the utmost this novel kind of bathing, and had partially attired himself, when he summoned the native who was waiting outside, and having bid him arrange his things for dressing, inquired his name. The native at first evinced great unwillingness to let it be known that he understood English, but finding that Merryweather was entirely ignorant of Hindustani, he at length told him in answer that his name was "Barjee Gopall."

"And I hear," said Merryweather, "that you were once my father's,—that is to say, Colonel Merryweather's servant?"

"Ah, Sahib!" replied Barjee Gopall affirmatively, as he became suddenly animated, "I was Colonel Merryweather's servant. Is master, Colonel's son?"

Barjee Gopall no sooner understood that this was the case, than he threw himself at Merryweather's feet, and placing both hands in front of his face, exclaimed, "Very many salaams to sahib. I have held sahib in my arms when he was little, little *bachha*, no higher than so much" (holding his hand a little way from the ground). "I very glad indeed to see master again."

"Well, Barjee Gopall," said Merryweather, "my memory is not so good as yours, I fear."

"Cannot master remember that I take him, when little boy, on the back of elephant. Colonel Merryweather have two—three elephant, and plenty camel and horse. He was one *burra sahib*. But master too, is plenty rich I think?"

Barjee Gopall's manner in asking this question manifested some inquisitiveness, though it was uttered with much assurance, as if no doubt was to be entertained on the subject; and Merry-

weather could not avoid noticing the look of mingled surprise and consternation, whether real or feigned, which stole over the countenance of the native, when he replied, "Indeed I am not. Very little of my father's property came to me." But as he was allowed to complete his toilet without any further manifestation of sympathy on the part of Mr. Gopall, this conversation soon faded from his mind. The incident, however, was again recalled, after the lapse of some days, by the perseverance with which Barjee Gopall seized every available opportunity to descant upon the splendour of his father's establishment and mode of life, his opulence, the number of his retinue, and the profound respect and homage that everywhere awaited him—remarks which generally ended with the oriental lament of *wah! wah!* that the *burra colonel sahib's* son should be less rich than his deceased parent. Barjee

Gopall, in fact, seemed on these occasions determined not to admit the correctness of Merryweather's explanation, and rejected the statement of his limited means as a mark of disrespect to the memory of his old master. Our hero was much amused at what he considered the native's garrulity, and would often encourage him to enter into conversation on the subject, when once happening to remark that Colonel Merryweather had very unaccountably left no papers of any description amongst his other effects, he observed Barjee Gopall staring at him with a look of horror, and apparently rooted to the spot. Suddenly, as if under the influence of some uncontrollable feeling, he hurriedly blurted forth—"Oh Sahib ! Barjee Gopall wicked thief, who take away box from Colonel Sahib's tent. Inside I see plenty papers ! But Sahib very angry, I think, and he will have Barjee Gopall sent beyond the great sea. Ah !" he con-

tinued, in a perfect agony at this idea,
“*kali pani men beja jaunga !*”

Merryweather who had listened with intense interest to the few words that had fallen from Bargee Gopall, now endeavoured, by many assurances that no harm should befall him, to obtain a little more information. He succeeded at length in pacifying him, and then asked what had induced him to steal things that could never be of any manner of use to him, and whether the papers were still in existence.

To the first of these interrogatories the native replied by allowing that the contents of the box were of no use to him, but he stated in a confused manner, and evidently not without feeling that he put forward a Mussulman's excuse, that he had been bribed to abstract it, declaring, however, much to Merryweather's satisfaction, that he could tell where it was.

Merryweather now hastened to impart to Mr. Ponsonby the information thus

acquired; but no sooner did the latter summon Bargee Gopall to his presence and commence questioning him, than his fears predominating, he retracted every word he had said. Threats availed as little as promises of reward, and at last nothing more could be extorted from him than that he was "only a poor humble man (*gareeb admi*) and how therefore was he to know anything of Europe papers?"

He continued to defend himself on this ground with great pertinacity, and all the powers of logic that Mr. Ponsonby could muster, and all the influence he could exercise were found inadequate to drive him from his stronghold.

A search was next made amongst the outhouses appropriated to the use of the servants, but nothing was found amongst Bargee Gopall's effects that could lead to a discovery of what they sought, and Mr. Ponsonby gave up all hope for the present of obtaining the missing docu-

ments. "It is useless," he said to his nephew on the following day, "to attempt to gain possession of these papers now, but I know how to manage these natives. In a little time, when Bargee Gopall's fears have subsided, I make no doubt that I shall be able to make him produce them. Were we to use coercion, we should only urge him to destroy them in order to screen himself, so I would advise you to have a little patience, and not to run the risk by precipitate measures of losing for ever the property which may yet be recoverable."

Mr. Ponsonby had long been a resident in Bombay, and was well acquainted with the principal civilians and officers, both of the Queen's and Company's service. Many opportunities consequently presented themselves of initiating his nephew and Somerville into Indian society, and under his auspices they received numerous invitations, amongst which was one to a ball about to be given by a member

of the supreme council the day previous to their intended departure from Bombay to Poona, whither, pursuant to the orders of the Adjutant General, they were to repair with as little delay as possible.

There is a difference between a ball in England and a ball in India. In England it is in general a reunion of youth and health, — a recreation eagerly and naturally sought by exuberant and buoyant spirits, where bright hopes of the future are only surpassed by the actual enjoyment of the passing hour. In India, the emaciated victims of tropical heat, who assemble to indulge in exertions unsuited to the climate, and by unwonted efforts to increase the daily discomfort they experience in an atmosphere where the thermometer seldom sinks much below 90°, bear the same resemblance to their English prototypes, as it may be supposed their own *larvæ* will bear to themselves, when they shall have been ferried over the dark Stygian lake.

On the evening of the appointed day, however, with all the excitement, at least, which novelty could lend to the scene, Merryweather and Somerville, accompanied by Mr. Ponsonby, presented themselves at the house of Mr. Bahawdur. It was a spacious and well-furnished mansion, standing in its own grounds or "compound," to use an oriental phrase, and crowds of Kitmutgars, Khansamans, and every other variety of menial, dark mustachioed and turbaned, glided about with noiseless steps, and were not out of character perhaps with the ideas suggested by the intense heat that prevailed.

A gay scene however presented itself to them as they entered the ball room. The greater part of the gentlemen were officers, and the uniforms of their several corps created at once a striking effect, and presented a strong contrast with the more modest and simple attire of that most efficient body of public men,—the civil servants of the East India Company.

The ladies were in a decided minority, and of these very few were unmarried. The dancing, consequently, for the most part, devolved upon them which, to say the least, became a very arduous amusement, as their suffering appearance abundantly testified. Merryweather also marvelled much at the pleasure a few "subs" who were present, could possibly derive from whirling round the room till their faces became as scarlet as their coats, when it was evident they were treated as mere Automatons by the fair partners to whom they devoted themselves, and when convenient, were discarded with the utmost nonchalance. Business, stern unrelenting business, seemed to be the order of the day, or rather of the night, with these ladies, and they were apparently incapable of alleviating the toil which it imposed by the slightest relaxation of feature or manner. Merryweather had had ample opportunity to indulge in these reflections,

and had begun to wish the time for departure was a little nearer at hand, when his uncle informed him that Miss Flirtree, a young and unmarried lady wished to try her fascinations upon him.

"She surely never made you her *confidante* on the subject, uncle?" asked Merryweather.

"Not exactly," said Mr. Ponsonby, "but she has asked me so many questions about the interesting young officer who accompanied me here, and whom I introduce to no one, that without any great exercise of penetration, this may be considered equivalent to a wish to be introduced to you."

"By all means then let us gratify a wish so flattering to myself. I scarcely thought that there was any person in the room who from disinterested motives would wish to take the trouble of becoming acquainted with another."

"Do not be too sure of the disinterestedness of the motive in the present instance."

"Why what motive can she have?" said Merryweather, "she knows nothing of me."

"I'll venture to say," rejoined Mr. Ponsonby, "that she knows a great deal more about you, than you imagine, and that she has not only found out when you arrived, and almost everything that you said and did on the passage out, but has also heard that you are generally supposed to be possessed of some private fortune."

"If that is the case I am sure I feel very much flattered by the interest she takes in me."

"Or that she would wish to take in your three per cents."

"Oh, there's no fear of that," rejoined Merryweather, laughing.

"Well, forewarned is forearmed, remember!" So saying he led Merryweather up to Miss Flirtree, and introduced him to that lady. It would perhaps be scarcely fair to say that she was

plain, and though she certainly could not be called good looking, yet her pretensions did not sink below mediocrity, while a few judicious artifices effectually concealed from the inexperienced eye, the number of years that had elapsed since her "teens."

"Will you" said Merryweather, after having engaged this lady for the next dance, "allow me to hold your bouquet for you?—what a very beautiful one it is."

"I think it must be, for do you know I have had that said to me so many times this evening. Now do" continued Miss Flirtree, with what was intended to be a captivating glance, "take compassion on me and proceed to some other subject."

"Nay then" said Merryweather, "I must certainly in self defence throw the burden upon you, for I am a complete stranger here, and scarcely acquainted with a single person present. You doubtless know a great many?"

"Yes," said Miss Flirtree, carelessly, "I know almost every body. But when I am so fortunate as to meet one who has just arrived from dear—dear England, I can scarcely find courage to talk of those whom I almost look upon as belonging to this country."

"Then you know" said Merryweather, with affected surprise, "that I have only just arrived from England?"

"Oh dear yes! It is not difficult to perceive that. People who have just come from England, bear such evident marks of home about them, that they are easily distinguished from those who have been in India for any time."

"But it does not appear," said Merryweather, fairly shamed into a little gallantry, "that every-body loses their good looks by a residence here."

"But I," said Miss Flirtree instantly appropriating the compliment, "have not been out here very long. Now I will be very confidential, and tell you that the

person seated opposite us, is my poor dear uncle." (Merryweather glanced in the direction, and saw a very large white waistcoat, surmounted by a remarkably acrid looking countenance,) "who has been such a great sufferer, that I have come out to be his nurse, for his gallant spirit will not allow him to return home for the sake of his health, while his services are required here."

"How exceedingly kind of you," said Merryweather, unable to repress a smile.

"But I am in great hopes," continued Miss Flirtree, "that he will yet listen to what I so frequently urge, and return home to recruit his strength for further exertions. I am sure in the sweet green fields of happy England, his health would be quickly restored to him."

"Doubtless," said Merryweather, abstractedly, "the very fact of returning would be sufficient I should think, to invigorate the most enfeebled frame."

"I am delighted to hear you say that, Mr. Merryweather, because it confirms my own opinion. I should also suppose from your manner that you have no intention of remaining in India very long?"

"Very long?" said Merryweather forcing his thoughts back from a subject which their conversation had suggested to him,—“Oh no. Very far from it. Though,” he continued, in a lively manner, and glancing at Miss Flirtree, to see what effect his words produced, “if I had advantages like my friend Mr. Somerville, who accompanied me here this evening, and possessed the ample means which he enjoys, I am not sure if my plans would not be different.”

“Mr. Somerville did you say?” said Miss Flirtree, suddenly changing her manner. “Dear me, how very long this dance is. Really you must let me sit down. I am so very tired. There is a chair by my uncle. My bouquet?—thank you.”

Merryweather bowed and moved away, and in a very short time perceived that Miss Flirtree was dancing with Somerville. He was watching with some interest her proceedings when his uncle came up to him and said,—

“Well Frank, have you been led into captivity?”

“Why no, uncle. The fact is that I have I believe misled her as to the possessor of the three percents. She is now under the impression that Somerville is the fortunate man, and as you may perceive has already commenced her operations upon him.

“So she has, by Jove!” said Mr. Ponsonby, with great glee. “She will soon find out however how the case really stands, and will bear you very little good will in consequence.”

“That will scarcely matter much, uncle,” said Merryweather. “Sufficient to the evening is the mischief thereof. But who is that majestic looking woman,

so gorgeously attired, whom you were conversing with just now?"

"The wife of the Commodore, and her character in every way tallies with her appearance. The present Governor on his first arrival here committed the monstrous solecism of taking down the wife of one of the members of council to his own table in preference to her. This was a slight not to be overlooked. She instantly left his house, and involved her husband, the member of council, the governor and the court of directors in a twelve months correspondence, the result of which was, that the governor in order to get out of the scrape, and to shelter himself from the hot fire she opened upon him, was obliged to apologise for his error."

"Does so much jealousy exist then in the society here?"

"To an unknown extent; though the people of India are for the most part kind to one another, I think, when their

intercourse is not of a nature to call forth this feeling. But woe to him who steps out of his place in the rank !”

“It will be well to bear that in mind then,” said Merryweather, laughing. “But who is that unmistakable votary of Mars, talking to your friend, the commodore’s wife ?”

“His name is Captain Tossover, and he belongs, I have heard, to a Welsh family, though I can scarcely believe that he is not a lineal descendant of that far-famed duellist whom Sheridan has immortalized,—Sir Lucius O’Trigger. You see he wears his arm in a sling, the consequences of his last encounter, the circumstances of which were not a little singular. An officer of another corps happened one evening to differ from him in opinion at mess, — ‘that is quite sufficient, sir,’ said Captain Tossover, ‘we need not prolong the discussion.’ The next morning they went out, and fired at one another three

times without effect, when the seconds at last managed to arrange the matter. They thereupon walked away together in the most friendly manner, but had not proceeded far, when Captain Tossover, turning to his recent antagonist, said, 'Then, of course, you agree with me *now* in what I said last night?'

'Not at all,' returned the other.

'Oh! then we will just return to the ground if you please,' was the immediate reply, which they accordingly did, and the result was the broken arm which Captain Tossover now wears in a sling.'

"Talking of belligerents, however, there is Major Start, celebrated for his pugilistic encounters. He goes by the name of 'The Rasper.'"

"What! that infirm looking old fellow who seems as if he had lived upon a curry diet all his life?"

"The same. He fought, by his own account, I know not how many pitch battles, when he was last in England,

with draymen, cabmen, *et id genus omne*, who invariably got 'wound up' at last by such a c-r-uel rasper, a favourite phrase, to which he owes his *soubriquet*. I believe though that I should do him injustice, were I not to add, that a tendency to extol his own pugilistic feats is his chief failing. I have known him act with judgment and impartiality under extremely trying circumstances. Look there! If Miss Flirtree has not managed to get your brother Griffin to take her into supper! She certainly casts her net very skilfully, but will be rather disappointed in the present instance if she succeed in landing her game. By the way, yonder there is one of her cast off suitors who is also the hero of tail."

"Tell it by all means," said Merryweather.

"Be it known then, that he was very anxious to make his vows at the Hymeneal altar, though it did not

appear that his desire for the connubial state was prompted by a partiality for any particular person. Under these circumstances, he frequently applied for leave of absence from his regiment on the plea of being about to marry, but for some cause or other, his efforts were unattended with success, and he as frequently returned in the same state of single blessedness. On one of these occasions he happened to meet Miss Flirtree, and paid her most devoted attention. But that astute young lady kept him hooked on only as a *pis-aller*, holding out hopes that if he obtained a lucrative staff appointment he had applied for, she might take the subject into consideration, but never irretrievably committing herself, and like a prudent general never failing to reserve the means of retreat. In the meantime another governor arose in the land who knew not Joseph, and he consequently lost at one and the same time, all chance of the appointment and of the

hand of Miss Flirtree. This *contretemps*, however threatened very disagreeable results, for at the time he became acquainted with this double disaster, he had just obtained leave of absence, under the stringent condition that he should be placed under arrest if he again returned to his regiment unmarried! I cannot say whether his commanding officer really intended to enforce this part of the compact, but he appears to have apprehended such a step, for in the greatest distress he explained his situation to a lady whom he had never spoken to before, and begged her to take compassion upon him. She did so, and within a week they were married, and as the story book says, have lived very happily ever since."

"He happened to fall upon his feet then," said Merryweather.

"Yes. A circumstance that could scarcely have been anticipated. But let us now follow the example which

every one has set us, and repair to the supper room."

This was a spacious apartment where the refreshments that were to reward the disinterested gyrations of the younger gentlemen in the ball room, were arranged with no slight attention to effect, or to the actual wants of their heated frames. The luscious mangoe, the delicate leechee, and the fragrant but insipid rose apple, and other tropical productions, gave a truly oriental character to the repast, while English preserved fruits, and more substantial viands, intermixed with champagne of excellent vintage and unexceptionably *frappé*, were also there in profusion. Merryweather had devoted himself with considerable satisfaction to some iced mangoes, and was highly applauding, in his own mind, the advantage that an Indian supper room possesses, in being supplied with a sufficient number of attendants, to obviate the necessity for

the conversion of spirited and public minded dandies into amateur waiters, when Somerville came up and said,—

“Really Merryweather, the people here are very difficult to comprehend. I was introduced to a young lady—there—that one who is going back to the ball room with the man in a staff uniform; and she seemed, by some extraordinary means, to know as much about me as I do myself; oddly enough too, she asked a great many questions about you, as my friend.”

“And was the explanation satisfactory?” said Merryweather.

“Well, I fancy not,” replied Somerville, “though that is the most unintelligible part of the whole affair, for I had no sooner become slightly confidential, and told her, as I thought in my best manner, that it was enough to make the fortune of a poor sub to be welcomed in India by such bright eyes, or something to that effect, when she instantly

asked her present companion for an ice, then for his arm back to the ball room, to find her uncle, and so left me to console myself with a glass of champagne."

Our hero and Somerville soon after took their departue; and as they were waiting in the hall for their bearers Miss Flirtree and her uncle passed them, the former of whom cast upon both, a mingled look of resentment and mistrust as she left the house.

CHAPTER VIII.

Black Driver (with great vigour.) "Ally Loo!

Hi. Jiddy, Jiddy. Pill. Ally Loo!"

Horses almost do it.

Black Driver (with his eyes starting out of his head.) "Lee, den. Lee, dere. Hi. Jiddy, Jiddy. Pill. Ally Loo, Lee-e-e-e!"

Dickens' American Notes.

AT an early hour next morning Merryweather and Somerville having taken leave of Mr. Ponsonby left the island of Bom-

bay in obedience to the orders of the Adjutant-General, and embarked in a Patoma, or native boat, for Panwell, on the main land of India, and the first stage on the journey to Poona. These boats are about the size of a small English fishing smack, and have a cabin or poop, which, although not quite high enough to admit of an upright posture, is in other respects comfortable, and being furnished with port-holes, a current of air is thus kept up which renders the whole pleasantly cool. Underneath these port-holes are seats with cushions, long enough to admit of the traveller lying down if he feel so inclined, a valuable privilege, as he is not unfrequently detained half way between Bombay and his destination by the turning of the tide.

For some miles a fair wind attended their progress, and a few green and luxuriant looking islands, that lay in their course, were rapidly passed. The water sparkled and foamed beneath the sharp

prow of their boat, and Bombay with its forest of masts, soon became indistinct in the distance. In front the view improved every minute, and even promised to justify the extravagant ideas that each had formed of Indian scenery. But soon a small headland was turned, and then a far different prospect opened before them. Muddy swamps were now seen to extend for miles, and rank grass and stunted herbage, the growth of the fever-breeding soil, bore evidence of the baneful influence of the pestilential vapours that hung around. Perhaps the scene in all its combinations was a fair emblem of the high visions formed by an aspiring youth at the commencement of his Indian career, and of the fallacies so soon to be revealed to him—the life he is doomed to lead, as little verifying his anticipations as the nauseous wilderness around could have been expected to follow the pleasing view our hero and Somerville had enjoyed at starting.

The wind now died away, and compelled them to anchor till the turn of the tide should again facilitate their progress up the creek which they had entered. Slowly the thick glutinous liquid, which it would be libellous to call water, contracted on either side of them, gradually exposing to view the slimy bed on which it had so lately reposed. The stream, as if conscious of its loathsome properties, and ashamed of the appearance it presented, glided down in sullen stillness. Not a ripple disturbed its surface, nor could any obstruction provoke its torpid movements. Stealthily would it flow round whatever might oppose its course, and without marking its disapprobation by so much as a murmur or a bubble, pass on in silence. How different, thought Merryweather, from the fresh, gurgling, leaping, restless stream that ran through Ulvacombe, every drop of which seemed animate with life, and through whose transparent waters could be discovered

the pebble, the rock, or the firm soil over which it held its course.

To be compelled to wait in a place where every object suggests some disagreeable association is not an enviable event, and wearily under such circumstances do the hours pass by. Merryweather and Somerville endeavoured to alleviate the monotony of their position by talking over all that had happened to them since their arrival in India, and for some time they were successful ; but their conversation, as if oppressed by the influences which surrounded them, gradually drooped, till they relapsed into silence and waited with forced resignation till the tide should begin to flow. This they at last perceived had commenced, and being impatient to proceed, they left the cabin to ascertain why the anchor was not being taken up. The cause was sufficiently apparent. Seated round an immense iron pot were all the boatmen, their eyes fixed with intense interest upon its contents.

Merryweather was at first under the impression that they were performing some religious rite, but this idea was soon dispelled by seeing them one after another dip their fingers into this culinary utensil, and after extracting a handful of rice, perform the same operation in another vessel filled with a yellow substance, and then convey the savoury mess to their mouths.

"Why they were eating like that when I looked out an hour ago," said Somerville.—"Here! you boatmen! when are you going on?"

"Go on soon," replied the man who had the guidance of the rest, and who had acted as steersman, but whose only apparent claim to superiority consisted in his wearing a larger cloth round his loins, and in perhaps possessing a blacker skin. "De Boatmen eat!"

"There is no occasion for you to tell us they do that, darcy," said Merryweather, "the fact is sufficiently obvious.

But the time has now come to proceed on our way, and as we particularly wish to leave this delightful spot, perhaps you will be so obliging as to get up the anchor."

Mr. Ram Chandah, the person whom Merryweather had addressed, understood enough English to know that he was just then required to do what was exactly contrary to his own wishes, and therefore appealed very vehemently to Merryweather on the necessity of the men fortifying themselves for their exertions, by laying in a good stock of provisions, and finally succeeded in obtaining a quarter of an hour's grace. At the expiration of this time however, no intention was visible on the part of Mr. Ram Chandah and his crew to get ready for departure. On the contrary, repletion, and a subsequent devotion to a "hubble bubble" pipe, which was handed about from one to the other, had produced a state of apathy, from which they seemed

to have no intention of rousing themselves. Under these circumstances, Merryweather and Somerville, having previously conferred together, seized Mr. Ram Chandah by the ankles and wrists, and notwithstanding his cries, which much resembled those of a pig about to be slaughtered, forcibly conveyed him from the alluring spot. Thus suspended between the two "sahibs," his person after a few preliminary vibrations, and a *one, two, three*, was successfully launched on to the poop, where he alighted with considerable force on that portion of it, which however well adapted by nature for the reception of thumps and bumps, is not, on that account, less susceptible of the injuries they entail. After measures had been taken to prevent him returning to his astonished associates, it was delicately intimated, that if his hands and feet were tied, perhaps the water just under the stern, was deep enough to drown him, on the possibility

of which he manifested considerable uneasiness, and cast a wistful look in the direction pointed out as favourable for his immersion. He was however a man of pride, and conceiving the hint thrown out about the course that would be adopted, should he prove refractory, as merely done to terrify him, he resolved upon making an effort to assert his dignity. "Sahib," he said, "belong to Ridgement, Boatman make complaint to Ridgement officer, Sahib get dismissed."

"Oh, you are beginning to threaten," said Merryweather. "Come, say your prayers, you have but a short time to live. Tie his hands, Somerville. That's right. Now overboard with him, unless—

Merryweather was here interrupted by the most violent vociferations on the part of Mr. Ram Chandah, over whose spirit there came a wonderful change. His hostile words were now changed into the most piteous supplications for mercy,

varied with hurried words to the boatmen to get up the anchor and proceed with all speed, which they instantly set about, and in a marvellous short space of time, were pulling away with their paddles as hard as they could. Mr. Ram Chandah was now released from his bonds, but given to understand that he would be held responsible for the behaviour of the others; and being entirely subdued, followed the instructions he received with the most implicit obedience. His black satellites, whom he immediately harangued in a most lively and excited manner if they showed the slightest indication of a wish to relax their exertions, were informed, (though not to the knowledge of our hero and Somerville, who, of course, did not understand the language,) that there were two devils on board, dressed up like sahibs, and that, if they did not make haste and get to Panwell, the boat would divide and swallow them all up, a statement they

fully believed. The consequence was, that for the remainder of the way to Panwell, the boat was propelled at a rate, which it had probably never exceeded since the days of its construction.

On arrival there, whether it was that the belief of Mr. Ram Chandah and his crew, in the supernatural powers of Merryweather and Somerville had become shaken, or that they were under the impression that their devilish propensities could not be exercised on dry land, must remain doubtful ; but be this as it may, they were not backward in urging their claims to some larger remuneration than usual, on account of their late unwonted exertions, and Merryweather so far satisfied them on this score, that even Mr. Ram Chandah, himself, seemed to consider that he had been sufficiently compensated for the indignity offered to his person.

On leaving the landing place, their attention was attracted to a vehicle,

apparently the hybrid of a bathing machine and a tax cart, which some enterprising person had in vain endeavoured to metamorphose into a phæton. To this conveyance, on close examination, it was just possible to trace a caricature resemblance, and they were wondering to what use it could possibly be applied, when a native under whose charge it seemed to be placed, informed them that if they were the Sahibs who had engaged a phæton to Poona, here it was, ready for their accomodation, and that the horses would be brought out immediately. The bare idea of travelling seventy miles in a trap of this description, appeared to them so preposterous, that their first impulse was to laugh at the statement just made as a joke, but the solemn aspect of the man, not unmixed with a look of pride, as he contemplated the property of his master, soon convinced them of the fallacy of their supposition, and they gradually drew the painful conclusion,

that the choice to which Mr. Hobson's name is generally attached, was the only one left them, and being thus compelled to yield to circumstances, they resolved to treat the matter philosophically, and not to increase unavoidable discomforts by unavailing regrets. Hearing, however, of the existence of a Government Bungalow in the immediate vicinity, they repaired thither, leaving directions for their equipage to be got ready and brought round to the place which we will now attempt to describe. A large thatched roof, which protected four mud walls from the weather, was pointed out to them as the place denominated, the "Government Bungalow," in which they were informed was a "mess man," who provided travellers with every thing they could possibly require, and who, to justify the commendations passed on him, ought to have rivalled a *restaurateur's* of the Boulevards or the Palais Royal. The appearance of

the building outside was certainly uninviting enough, nor did they feel their desire to enter it at all increased by the obstructions that opposed their doing so. These consisted of a drain, meandering in front of the principal entrance, and in which several pigs were reclining, whose approbation of the spot was occasionally testified by a lazy grunt, unmistakably expressive of their satisfaction. Pariah dogs of the most emaciated, mangy, and loathsome description, that ever disgraced the canine species, were snarling over a heap of dry bones, horns, and refuse of every kind on one side, while on the other, the picture was diversified by broken-kneed ponies, apparently in the last stage of consumption, and sickly looking ducks and fowls, the latter having a particularly long, lanky, parched look, which gave them the appearance of walking upon stilts. After a vigorous assault upon the various tribes in possession of the soil, who at first showed some inten-

tion to defend their sanctum against intrusion, Merryweather and Somerville managed to effect an entrance into the bungalow itself. They found the area enclosed by the four mud walls, divided into three small rooms, in each of which was a table, four chairs, and a sofa or bedstead with a cane bottom. Each room besides boasted of a piece of canvass overhead, meant to imitate a ceiling; a mud, or what appeared to be a mud floor, and some pictures hung on the white-washed walls. One of these was a coloured representation of a sentimental scene between a gentleman and lady, underneath which were inscribed the affecting words, "Don't say nay." The lady, who was about to leave the room was turned towards the door, but her head which, by some wonderful means, was twisted completely round—had its downcast eyes fixed upon the gentleman at her feet, who had hold of one of her hands, and was apparently making

the touching appeal we have quoted. This gentleman's toilet had been performed with such care that not even a hair of his beautifully curled whiskers was out of place. His coat fitted him with a precision that was never before witnessed except on the dummies in a ready-made clothes shop, while his trousers were strapped down over the most unexceptionable boots, so tightly, that one gazed in momentary expectation of their relieving themselves by wrenching off the buttons, and rending the paper on which they were painted.

Another was the portrait of a middle-aged gentleman, with a rubicund nose, who apparently was enjoying his own reflections over a bottle of wine of a bright cherry colour, and a bunch of grapes that in size would have shamed the produce of any vine in Brobdignagia. His lips were pursed up in a way which plainly implied that his thoughts were his own, and would not on slight grounds

be communicated to the curious or impertinent. But to the remaining works of art which adorned this saloon no description of ours could possibly do justice, and for this reason alone we pass them over.

After some time had been employed by our Hero and Somerville in the vain endeavour to attract attention by loud vociferations, they thought it expedient to try if they could succeed by other means. For this purpose they entered a verandah formed by the projection of the thatch beyond the walls, and supported by frail looking stakes nearly eaten through with the dry rot. They then saw, what at first seemed to be a bundle of the striped cotton stuff, used sometimes as a carpet in the East, till a slight movement by the object on which their eyes rested convinced them that it was alive. Upon this bundle being pushed about, it slowly began to unroll itself, and the inanimate portion having by this process been removed, the interior was found to

consist of a human being of the male sex, though the close resemblance he bore to a monkey caused Merryweather to hesitate before he addressed him. His dress was European, so far at least as a dirty shirt and a pair of trousers, apparently made out of blue check dusters, entitles it to that designation, while his features and general appearance indicated a Portuguese origin.

"Master want tiffin or dinner?" said the object mechanically, and speaking before Merryweather or Somerville had had time to address a word to him, getting up and rubbing his eyes; an enquiry suggested by the fact that his mind so constantly dwelt upon subjects connected with eating, that his waking thoughts immediately led him to the conclusion that his professional services were required in some shape or other.

"We should like anything that we can get," replied Merryweather. "Dinner

would be preferable if you can get it in any reasonable time."

An assurance that they should have it immediately was given much in the same vague manner as the inquiry had been made. Their new found *maitre d'hôtel* then very leisurely proceeded to the front of the house, and with a dexterity that could only have been the result of long practise, had soon whipped up a bilious looking duck in one hand, and a long legged fowl in the other, with which he quietly sauntered to a hut adjoining the bungalow, that served the purpose of a kitchen, a sleeping apartment for a man with his wife and family, and occasionally a dressing room. From the door of this little sanctum, which was devoid of a chimney, there soon issued a quantity of smoke and feathers, showing that the process of killing and plucking had been going on inside, and that a fire had been kindled to prepare for the

table the animals whose span of life had been so unexpectedly shortened.

In the course of an hour, during which time Merryweather and Somerville had taken a stroll, which had produced in each of them a strong desire never to see Panwell again, symptoms of their repast being nearly ready were manifested by a table cloth, with unequivocal signs of former service, knives and forks, a saltcellar and cruet stand, being laid in one of the rooms of the bungalow, and at last came the dinner itself. Nor would there have been any just cause of complaint if the quality had been in any proportion to the quantity. About a dozen dishes were placed upon the table by their attendant, who had evidently shaken off his apathy, and in addition to cooking their dinner had found time to improve his personal appearance by the addition of a pair of shoes, a white jacket, and an old black silk cravat, arranged *a la* Byron.

His hair, too, which before presented a tangled mass of wool which it seemed no comb could possibly penetrate, had by the copious application of cocoanut oil, been reduced to order, and arranged in two shining curls, plastered against each side of his face.

Merryweather and Somerville now took their seats at the table on which the dishes had been arranged with mathematical precision, and on the covers being removed by the Portuguese servant, the delicacies on which they were to break their fast were one by one disclosed to view. There was the duck, looking a great deal more bilious without its feathers, and the fowl a great deal drier and more parched. There again was some bacon, which had of course been contributed by the Society of Swine whose knowledge of worldly bliss was confined to wallowing in the drain outside. There were some vegetables also, and "side dishes," but to the latter it would have

been extremely hazardous to assign any definite character or name, though upon looking upon them more attentively, it occurred to Merryweather and Somerville with singular force that they belonged to a species of quadrupeds not generally made use of for food, but which even then were pouring forth their melodious croakings within a stone's throw of the Bungalow.

The fowl being the least objectionable of all the good things set before them satisfied their appetite. The other viands, including those of doubtful appearance and character, were sent away untouched, probably not for the first time, and with equal probability destined to be again subjected to the culinary art, and to re-appear for the next traveller in the shape of a curry, or a stew. By the time their meal had been disposed of, the vehicle which was to convey them to Poona came to the door, and as the evening had closed in, and they were informed that

they would arrive in Poona before the reappearance of the sun, they caused the cumbrous looking hood to be pushed back, a feat which could only be accomplished by great exertion, and the destruction of a large portion which broke off in the struggle.

They set out at last, however, and rattled through the dirty-looking village to the evident admiration of the inhabitants. Standing behind the carriage was a man, making ridiculous efforts to imitate an English post horn, and always taking care to favour each knot of his acquaintance larger than usual with a sample of his skill. If a cart in the road caught his eye, though a quarter of a mile distant, it was the immediate cause of a succession of the most unearthly sounding blasts till the obstruction was passed, while in the interval between these musical performances, besides the usual noise which accompanies a carriage in motion, a confused and ominous sound

of jingling, chafing and rumbling was heard in every part of the conveyance, which forcibly suggested to the inexperienced mind that its immediate dissolution was at hand. By dint, however, of flogging, the jaded animals, whose united exertions were but just equal to their task, accomplished the first stage, a distance of about five miles, within the hour. Here an unexpected difficulty arose. Bad as were the horses which had brought them thus far, they nevertheless were the best in the postmaster's stud, and were always placed in the phaeton at first starting, in order to insure the departure of the traveller. Now, however, that Merryweather and Somerville had arrived at the second stage, and to go back would present the same difficulty as to proceed, they were forced to remain passive witnesses of the new scene which passed before them. Two bony looking animals much against their inclination, were brought out of a

ruined looking shed that served them for a stable, to replace those that had just been released. With their ears well back, and an evident desire to kick everything that came within reach of their hind legs. The appearance they presented was not one to impress the beholder favourably as to their future behaviour, even if the hazardous attempt to harness them to the phaeton should be attended with success. This task, however, by a judicious combination of force and skill, was at last accomplished. The reins were handed to the driver. The "guard" took up his position behind, and began blowing his horn. Everything was in readiness, but for some reason the phaeton remained immovable. A vigorous application of the whip on the backs of the horses was next heard, the result of which was the counter-application of their heels on the phaeton, which vibrated throughout with the shock. Merryweather and Somerville now sprung up on the

front seat. There were the horses, with their ears still as far back as they could get them, their fore legs firmly planted on the ground, and their whole attitude evincing a most decided repugnance to proceed. Two men advanced to their heads and endeavoured to pull them forward by the bridle, making use at the same time of a few encouraging words. But they had listened too often to these blandishments for any such mild expedient to be effective, and their whole demeanour showed that could they, like Balaam's ass of old, have suddenly become gifted with the power of utterance, "gammon," would have sprung spontaneously to their lips. Kindness, therefore, being evidently lost upon them, they were assailed with a shower of thumps, kicks, and pokes, by the men at their heads, while the driver kept his whip unceasingly employed. All three at the same time maintained a running fire of abuse, principally addressed

to the female relations of the objects of their wrath,—a species of eloquence in which it may, *par parenthese*, be observed the natives of India are wont to indulge in, whether their indignation be provoked by their own species, or by dumb animals.

On the present occasion the most philosophical contempt was evinced by the two quadrupeds for the epithets made use of in connection with their families, as well as for the illtreatment which was being so freely administered to them by their persecutors, and a pause having in consequence taken place, till the men at their heads, who had numerous resources for every emergency, should determine upon what course they were 'next to pursue; the horses took advantage of the respite to back towards the stables, and were on the point of depositing our Hero and Somerville in a ditch, when this retrograde motion was arrested by a fore leg of each being held off the ground

by means of ropes, which, with great dexterity, the men slipped on in time to prevent the catastrophe. The next phase of the contest showed the men who had so skilfully thrown the lasso round the fore legs of their opponents, applying with the assistance of several others their whole strength to the ropes, to the evident discomfiture of the horses, who, in order to prevent the dislocation of their shoulders, trotted on a little way up the road, but again became stationary upon finding that the cause of annoyance had been suspended. Again the ropes were applied, and again they advanced till they felt themselves free, and then came to a stop as before. They were evidently horses of deep calculation, and considered their present troubles preferable to dragging the phaeton to the next stage. Things now reached a crisis. Human ingenuity, however, prevailed, though by a device so cruel that had Merryweather and Somerville been aware of what was

intended, they would have interposed in time to prevent the experiment. A small bundle of straw was placed under each of the horses. This was set fire to, and as the flame ascended, singeing the hair and scorching their bodies, they cantered forwards, and stopped no more, till they arrived at the next stage. Similar difficulties were frequently encountered during the remainder of the journey, but strange to say, it was without any accident that they found themselves the next morning at Poona.

CHAPTER IX.

Sanguine et igne micant oculi : riget ardua cervix ;
Et setæ, densis similes hastilibus, horrent.
Fervida cum ranco latos stridore per armos
Spuma fluit : dentes œquantur dentibus Indis.
Fulmen ab ore venit : frondes afflatibus ardent.

Ovids Met :

FOR six months after Merryweather and Somerville had arrived at Poona, they were constantly employed in learning

the practical part of their profession, a necessary business, but not on that account the more interesting. To handle about a musket in every conceivable way—to practise the sword exercise till the possibility of being struck anywhere by any gladiator, however fierce, is reduced to an absurdity—to successively turn, wheel, retire and advance in the presence of an imaginary enemy of infinitely superior numbers, whose forces are finally routed without the loss of a man on the victorious side, are acquirements doubtless of the greatest importance to the young soldier; but whether, after being thus engaged for six months in a climate like that of India, the youthful aspirant to military fame thinks the colour of his jacket as gaudy as the first day he put it on, may be considered problematical.

One morning after Merryweather had been examined in these various branches of the art of war, and pronounced eligible

for service, he received a letter from his uncle, stating that Bargee Gopall had at last afforded a clue to the missing box of papers. He now confessed that he had received instructions from some person whose name he would not at present disclose to destroy them, but that he had determined to conceal the box and its contents, till some future period and had in fact buried it at the time under-ground. The letter then went on to say that the native had offered to proceed to the spot with Merryweather and surrender the long hidden treasure. Mr. Ponsonby added that he had immediately closed with this proposition, and strongly recommended his nephew to apply for the necessary leave of absence, to enable him to prosecute the search, stating moreover that he had stimulated the zeal of Bargee Gopall by promising him a considerable reward should the result of his proceedings be successful.

Merryweather had not long perused this epistle, and was about to write a formal application for leave of absence on 'urgent private affairs' when Somerville rode up to the door. They were not now perhaps on such intimate terms as formerly, for though they had not had any misunderstanding, yet the coolness which exists between the two services of which they were members, had imperceptibly communicated itself to them individually. But, envy, which Mr. Locke describes as "that uneasiness of mind caused by the consideration of a good we desire, obtained by one we think should not have it before us," would perhaps best convey an idea of the feeling that exists between the two branches of the military profession in India, for one service looks with a jaundiced eye upon the preference shown to the Company's officers in the distribution of staff appointments and local honours, while the latter are stung at the precedence given to the

Queen's troops, and at the more favourable reception in society, undoubtedly experienced by the officers in Her Majesty's service. Still this state of affairs had not materially affected the friendship of Merryweather and Somerville, and it was with great pleasure the former perceived who his visitor was.

"How are you?" he said, "pray come in. *Ho Ghorawallor! sahib ka ghora pakarao.* You see I have managed to pick up sufficient Hindustani to tell them to hold your horse. What has been your success with the language? You are obliged to pass an examination, are you not?"

"Yes, a colloquial one, and I have already passed it," said Somerville.

"Well you have not been long about it. But come and sit out in the verandah. It is cooler here than anywhere else. And now, how do you like your Regiment?"

"I confess that I am disappointed."

"My predictions are then fulfilled?"

"I am not prepared to admit as much as that," said Somerville, "I was merely speaking of my Regiment. From all accounts, it appears to be the very worst in the service, and my disappointment consists in finding that as there is no similarity of ideas, tastes, or feelings between myself and the officers whom I have yet seen, no friendship can exist between us, as these are amongst its most essential components."

"There is no doubt," said Merryweather, tilting his chair back, "that you have acted upon misconceived notions, and that the expectations you formed were altogether misplaced."

"You are prejudiced," said Somerville.

"No, I think not," replied Merryweather, "I am quite ready to change my opinion if you will show me sufficient cause for doing so; but you yourself say that you are disappointed."

"You will not deny, I suppose, that there are indifferent regiments in the Queen's service. A part does not condemn the whole."

"No ! But your only means of judging of the whole is from your experience of the part ; and if a part is admitted to be bad, that certainly is not a premiss from which you would infer the perfection of the remainder."

"But listen a moment, and then say if you think that my regiment is a fair sample. You know, of course, that our regiments contain only half the number of officers that there are in yours. Notwithstanding this, six of them are away on staff employ, most probably all of them officers who have distinguished themselves, and whose presence, on that very account, is the more required in the regiment, where their influence would create a better feeling and more gentlemanly tone. Then there are officers away on sick certificate, on furlough, and

on leave. The commanding officer even is amongst the latter, and for the last two months the regiment has been under the command of the adjutant, who has had only three subalterns under him doing duty!"

"If that is the way they conduct matters in your service, I am sure I am not astonished at the state into which it has fallen. I only wonder that it is so good. What ensues in your regiment from this state of affairs?"

The result is what might be anticipated. There is no emulation. Every one acts exactly as he thinks fit, and such a thing as *esprit-de-corps* is unknown, for although the exploits of the regiment, ever since its formation, are constantly the theme of conversation, yet the officers themselves take no measures to preserve its credit; but on the contrary, by constant disagreements, by forming parties, or by combining against a particular individual, who, for

some cause, real or imaginary, has excited their resentment, they bring it into general disrepute. Practices, too, are indulged in, under the idea that they are extremely fast and knowing, of a very questionable character."

"What may they be?"

"One of them is what is termed 'sticking a griffin,' which is no other than quietly swindling a young officer who comes to join his regiment of anything he possesses that happens to excite the cupidity of his new associates."

"And upon what plan do they proceed?"

"Generally, by way of exchange, passing off worthless native articles, which they persuade their dupe are indispensable to him, for some portion of the serviceable English outfit, which a new comer invariably brings with him."

"And how did you fare in this mart for despoiling the unwary?"

"I escaped pretty well, though not without some unsuccessful attempts at extortion. For instance, a horse was offered to me for sale for five hundred rupees, but happening to receive some doubtful information about him, I declined buying him just then, and said I would think about it. Two months later, and without any further negotiation or agreement, the horse was sent round to me one morning, with a note containing a request that I would send a check for the price that had been agreed upon between us, and also expressing a hope that as the fore legs of the horse had now been rendered stronger than ever by the operation of firing and blistering, I should not object to pay the farrier's bill. Now assuming that a somewhat lax morality prevails in horse dealing, this I think was rather a strong proceeding."

"Unquestionably," said Merryweather, with a smile, "and yet you are determined, notwithstanding all this, to think

well of the service ; why, it is not only acting contrary to your judgment, but in defiance of your own convictions."

"Granted, if I thought the whole service resembled this particular regiment, but there is another here of a totally different character, and into which I hope soon to exchange."

"I have heard of the Regiment you mention," said Merryweather, "and from all accounts there is in it a superior class of men. But I have no hesitation in affirming that it must necessarily be an exceptional case, for whether it is that the Court of Directors are of opinion that their military establishment, which they maintain at so vast an expense, is constructed upon such infallible principles as not to require efficient officers, or that they find it necessary to yield to the influence of the holders of East India Stock in return for their independent support ; yet it is beyond a doubt that they admit into their service many whose

previous education and pursuits have not exactly qualified them for a profession. Now I do not for an instant mean to say that this, *a priori*, is a reason for their not being admitted. On the contrary my opinions lie quite the other way. Had such a person the attributes of a gentleman, and were he moreover an agreeable fellow, I for one should feel just as disposed to make him my friend as if he could trace his descent in a direct line from one of the Barons who came over with William the Conqueror. But these persons when they reach India bring with them all the preconceived notions, habits and feelings of their class, and so overwhelm the service, that if any particular Regiment has escaped the effect of their presence, I maintain that it must be an exception to the general rule."

"Then you take it for granted that those whom you have described are in sufficient numbers to infuse a bad tone into the whole service?"

“Undoubtedly—because as you have just observed, a large number of the best men in every Regiment are always away on staff employ. The remainder I conceive, must have peculiar disadvantages to struggle against. They find those of their own set in a minority. Many of them moreover have arrived in this country when quite boys; without any fixed ideas or principles on any subject, and withdrawn at an early age from all the social influences of home—finding themselves irretrievably involved with persons whose tastes are opposed to their own, they grow callous—old recollections fade away, and they gradually sink into the habits of thought and action which belong to those around them. This is the process by which a service, that might be rendered one of the finest in the world, becomes irremediably contaminated. I am also inclined to think that the efficiency of the native Regiments depends even more entirely than that of

the European, upon the moral influence and military character of their officers, for as far as my experience has gone the people of India are excessively quick at appreciating character."

"I will grant you that," replied Somerville, "for it was only the other day that I happened when on guard to overhear some of the men discussing the merits of their respective officers. They described some as being '*bahut achha sahibs*,' by which they meant generally that they liked them. Others were pronounced '*kabil*,' that is to say, clever. Another was a '*bewukuf*,' literally, a person devoid of sense, or, as we should express it, an idiot. Another was a '*shaitan*'—*anglice*, devil, and so on. As I was not supposed to understand the language at that time, I took no notice of what they were saying, but I could not help thinking that some of these strictures, however improper for them to indulge in, were

nevertheless remarkably correct. By the way, I have not yet mentioned the principal thing I came about. The regiment which I told you I hoped to exchange into have made me a member of their hunt, and we meet to-morrow for the first time. Will you come?"

"With great pleasure," said Merryweather.

"Well then, you had better make up your mind to start this evening, as the place where the boar are 'marked down,' is about twelve miles from hence. I have sent out a small tent to sleep in, and the hunt have sent out a large one for all other purposes. You will therefore have no trouble on that score, but you had better send out the horse you intend riding immediately. Yellerly is the name of the place."

"I will do so," said Merryweather, "and what say you if we ride out there together this evening?"

“Agreed. I will call for you at five.
Au revoir.”

Merryweather had now to determine which of his horses to send out to Yellerly. There were three in his stable. One a common hack, which would do to ride to cover upon, but of the other two he was for sometime undecided which should carry him on the morrow's chase. “Legacy,” a powerful half-bred horse, would shirk nothing, but then his speed would probably not be equal to the horses against whom he would have to contend. “Phantom” was the name of the other horse, and was a thoroughbred Arab, the gift of his uncle. But to hunt ‘Phantom,’ Merryweather felt would be impossible.

‘Phantom’ would follow him about like a dog, come into his bungalow, and even eat bread out of his plate while he was at breakfast. ‘Phantom’ would neigh with delight if he heard Merryweather's voice, and if the bars of his

box were withdrawn, would instantly gallop up to his side. No. "Phantom" must remain. Having therefore so resolved, he despatched "Legacy" with all speed to the scene of action.

According to his appointment, Somerville called for our Hero at five, and both then started for Yellerly, whither they had already been preceded by the greater portion of those who intended to join the hunt. The sun was fast nearing the horizon, and about an hour after they had started entirely sunk from view. Twilight, that delightful but evanescent time in India, set in. But every minute the darkening folds of night acquired a more sombre hue. The rays of light receded by swift and perceptible degrees, and the fierce ruler of the tropical day had scarcely relieved them from his presence, when it was dark. Twelve hours respite ! Twelve hours had to elapse ere his apparent progress through the trackless heavens would recommence but then

again he would glare over the site of his former power, scorching the parched earth with his perpendicular rays, extracting from stream and river every cooling quality, dispersing or drying up with jealous anger the friendly cloud which might shelter the wayfarer from his potent beams, and finally sink to rest, only to rise again on each succeeding morrow the same unrelenting persecutor.

The evening was beautifully calm and every sound that disturbed the stillness of the heated atmosphere, was heard with wonderful distinctness. From every swampy piece of ground the confused screaming of a multitude of frogs now assailed their ears. Now the shrill and plaintive cry of the jackall followed by the barking of some village dog were wafted past them, and occasionally as they cantered on a heard of startled deer would dart across their path and with a few bounds place themselves beyond

reach of danger from the intruders. At last some lights shining out from amidst a clump of trees at a short distance in front revealed the place of rendezvous, and spurring on they were soon in the midst of the tents pitched by their brother sportsmen.

The call of "Ghorawallor" immediately brought some natives to take charge of their horses, and dismounting, they made the best of their way in the direction from whence they now heard sounds of mirth and festivity. The encampment, for such it was, consisted of five or six tents of various sizes, in the centre of which was one much larger than the rest. On a nearer approach Merryweather saw through the open "fly" of this tent a number of officers, seated round a table, on which was placed wine, glasses, fruit, and cigars. A more favourable position could not have been chosen, and the whole scene which now presented itself

was strikingly picturesque. The trees were sufficiently high and far apart to admit of tents being pitched under them, whilst their spreading tops interposed an effectual barrier to the sun. Horses were picketted in various directions with head and heel ropes, and now greeted those of their kind which had just arrived with loud neighs. At the foot of the trees fires had been kindled, and as they crackled and blazed, a bright red glare was thrown around, which showed the swarthy figure of many a native, preparing his simple meal. Nor were the agreeable associations produced by this first view diminished, when in company with Somerville, Merryweather entered the tent set apart for gastronomic purposes. Contrary to his expectations, he was introduced to men with whom he could make himself instantly at home. They were the officers of the —— regiment, and their renown in the field had not

more entitled them to be considered the first regiment in the service, than the harmony and good feeling which prevailed in their social intercourse had established their claim as "*bons camarades*."

Their new guests were received with the frank hospitality which distinguishes every true lover of the chase, whether under the burning sun of India, or when the echo of hound and horn blends every feeling into harmony in the green fields of merry England. The next day's sport, with all its exciting anticipations, immediately became the theme of conversation. Songs were sung and toasts went round, and when the advanced state of the evening warned Merryweather to seek the repose necessary to recruit his strength for the exertions of the morrow, he felt that the evening had been one of the pleasantest which he had passed since quitting home.

The next morning the whole party started for the scene of action,—a jungle at a short distance from the encampment where an enormous boar was reported to have taken up his abode. This jungle was exceedingly thick in many places, and covered entirely one side of a long precipitous hill. Immediately on the arrival of the huntsmen, a hundred natives who had previously received their instructions, advanced in a long extended line, which reached from the base to the summit of the hill, and with loud shouts endeavoured to drive the game from his fastness. The boar, however, had taken refuge at the opposite extremity of the jungle, and some hours therefore elapsed before the beaters arrived at the spot where he lay concealed. In the meantime, expectation, which had been at its height amongst the assembled cavalcade below, now began to wane, and the most sanguine were on the point of desponding, when a loud and continued shouting

from the beaters, echoed by the cheering cry of 'there he bursts' from the sportsmen, proclaimed that the boar had broken cover.

The natives, alarmed at the gigantic size of the animal whose lair they had invaded, receded on every side, and free access was thus given to the upper part of the hill. A body of men who had been stationed on the summit as a reserve, rushed to the spot which the boar was approaching, and with shouts and yells, and by setting on their dogs, succeeded in turning him back. But he quickly sees his enemies beneath him, and makes another desperate effort to cross the hill. At a long swinging trot he dashes through the tangled brake and soon leaves his pursuers far behind. Again he nears the summit. This time there is no one to oppose his progress. He passes the debateable ground and disappears on the opposite side.

The huntsmen, in the meantime, who had expected that the boar would be driven to the plain below, had now no other resource than to follow him. Putting spurs to their horses, therefore, they force their way through briar and thicket, and urge the gallant steeds up the precipitous face of the hill. Now a rider and his horse suddenly disappears in some deep nullah formed by the mountain torrent, whose treacherous abyss lay hid beneath a thicket of shrubs. Now on some almost perpendicular ascent the willing horse is seen to strain every muscle in his exertions to bear his rider forward, but unable to proceed, pause, and with every limb quivering with excitement, appear as if his next movement must be a headlong plunge into the yawning chasm beneath.

Merryweather was amongst the foremost of the party and having taken the most direct course found himself in a position of imminent peril. Woe

to him if his saddle girths break,—inevitable destruction must be the result. Woe to him if the ground crumble beneath his horse's hoofs—no means were there to avert a dreadful doom. To turn was impossible. "One more effort, 'Legacy,' and we reach the summit." The noble animal responded to the encouraging tones of his master and struggled desperately to proceed. The stones and earth displaced in the attempt fell leaping and bounding hundreds of feet below, but he succeeded and stood panting and exhausted on the top of the hill. A few minutes breathing were all that could be allowed for presently his competitors for the spear, three in number, made their appearance. The rest of the field were far away, and had but little chance of joining in the sport.

An anxious enquiry was now made of a native as to the direction the boar took on disappearing from the view of the party who had clambered up the ghaut.

“*Dekhō, sahib !*” (Look, sahib,) replied the man in a tone of the greatest excitement, pointing with his finger to the middle of a deep valley, and at the same time bestowing epithets on the boar, which even in Hindustani we hesitate to record.

There was some reason however for the extreme enmity he displayed, for a deep wound in his back to which he did not fail to draw attention was evidently the recent rip of a boar's tusk, and he proceeded to inform them that it was done by the identical animal now endeavouring to escape. There was no time to be lost for the boar under cover of the bushes was rapidly seeking the plains below, and Somerville, who was of the party happening to catch sight of him led the way, closely followed by his companions. Deep in their horses flanks they bury the inciting spur and with impetuous speed rush down the mountain side. Nor rock,

nor bush, nor precipitous descent, can check their headlong career. Now they gallop in quick succession along some narrow path which skirts the edge of a deep ravine. Now again where the ground permits they strive for the foremost place, leaping over obstructions, disappearing in the beds of intervening nullahs, or emerging on the opposite side almost at the same moment.

They soon reach the bottom of the hill, and now the boar's fate is sealed. In the very centre of the plain, striving his utmost to gain the shelter of a neighbouring jungle, the huge animal is seen plodding over the heated ground. His speed, which over the wooded hills had defied competition, is now reduced to a pace not much faster than that of a man, and his panting sides show with what difficulty even this is maintained. His immediate pursuers have now an equal chance of the spear. The horses partake of their riders' ardour, and

each gallantly endeavours to outstrip his opponent. At racing speed the plain is crossed, and long before the boar can reach the haven within his view, the loud tramp of horses in swift career warn him of his approaching fate. Vain now he knows is the attempt to escape, and with dauntless resolution he turns to face his foes. Close at hand are some stunted trees and bushes, and betaking himself to this cover, he sullenly remains at bay. On rush the hunters, but a long deep wound, extending from the saddle girths to the stifle joint, greets the horse of the first assailant. Severely, however, did the boar himself suffer in this attack, for Merryweather buried his spear deep in the back of the animal's neck, and when he withdrew the reeking point, a torrent of crimson gore spouted from the wound. As if conscious that his death was at hand, and that all that remained to him was to sell

his life as dearly as possible, he made a final rush at his enemies, but the hero of a hundred such fights received the furious charge, awaiting the attack with a composure that ensured success. At the moment that the sharp tusk of the boar was about to scoop its way into the unprotected flesh of his horse, the practised hand of its rider forced the spear's resistless point through and through him till buried in the ground beneath, the monster's writhing form was kept pinioned to the earth. Gradually his fierce struggles became fainter and fainter. Fastly flowed the life stream from his wounds, and when the deadly weapon was withdrawn, a tremor passed through the huge form of their late formidable antagonist, and he rolled over a lifeless carcase on the plain.

The boar's quivering limbs had scarcely assumed the appearance of death, when the greater portion

of those who had started for the hunt were seen galloping across the plain, and although they came too late to join in the sport, all dismounted and viewed with wonder the gigantic proportions of their victim. Perhaps, too, a feeling of remorse passed through the breasts of some that so gallant an animal should have suffered death merely for the sake of affording them a temporary amusement. But it was not long before some natives arrived on the spot with two thick bamboo poles resting upon their shoulders, to which the animal was quickly lashed by the legs, and with the disappearance of their conquered foe, this generous sympathy we fear also vanished.

The day now being far advanced, there was no longer any inducement to beat the jungles a second time. The whole party, therefore, recrossing the hills, returned to the encampment which they had left in the morning.

CHAPTER X.

In vain the circling chieftains round them closed,
For Otho's frenzy would not be opposed ;
And from his lip those words of insult fell,
His sword is good who can maintain them well.
Lara.

PLEASURABLE are the sensations which
take possession of us, when the excitement created by strong personal exertion,

not unaccompanied by danger has passed away, and if the reaction be enhanced by the inspiring juice of the grape, and the soothing influence of a fragrant cigar, it is grateful under such circumstances to dwell on the feats we have performed and the perils we have escaped. But if these seductive moments must be indulged in with caution and prudence in the temperate north, with tenfold greater distrust should we yield to their influence in tropical India. Fatigued with their exertions, and parched with thirst, their brain already made dizzy by an unwonted exposure to the mid-day sun, Diana's votaries here return from the chase, and but too frequently by copious and refreshing, but treacherous draughts, to tarnish the laurels they have won in her service.

Merryweather and Somerville, from inexperience of the rapid effect produced by even the mildest Bacchanalian indulgence at such a time, quaffed deeper

than the rest of the enticing fluid, which with the transparent ice floating on the top, was so invitingly placed before them. The consequences were soon visible. Loud and angry words arose, and they carried on their dispute with an asperity and waywardness which set the well meant intervention of the remainder of the party at defiance.

"You will, I suppose," said Merryweather, after the discussion had been continued for some time, "allow that the boar could never have lived after the wound he received in the neck from my spear, although I admit that Mr. Elliot did give the finishing stroke?"

"I believe," said Somerville, who in addition to being excited with wine, was with the rest considerably nettled that the only Queen's officer present should have been successful in so large a field, "I believe that in a few days he would have been none the worse for it. You have by accident won the

spear, I grant, but not a particle of honour with it."

"Well," said Merryweather, with the view of stopping a discussion, which he now felt threatened a quarrel if further prolonged, "it matters little to whom the honour is due. We have had a capital day's sport, and between us have killed it appears as large a boar as has ever been seen in these jungles."

"That's true," said Somerville, "but that does not alter what I said—that you did not inflict a death wound, and that your striking the boar at all was a pure accident. Now to prove this I'll lay you a wager that if you go out singly with any person present,—myself even included—and a boar should be killed, you will have no share in his death."

"Really," said Merryweather, getting angry, "I am at some loss to discover your motive for so unnecessary a taunt. I have not attempted to laud my own acts. It is yourself who attach so much

importance to them, and I begin to think that the uncalled for remarks you have indulged in, are either prompted by inordinate vanity, or by a wretched jealousy of an event which is hardly of sufficient importance to warrant such a feeling."

"Apologize!" replied Somerville, starting up with every evidence of ungovernable passion displayed in his countenance. "Apologize for what you have just said!"

"Certainly not," replied Merryweather, "you drew my retort upon yourself."

"I ask you once more," said Somerville, seizing a decanter, "if you will apologize?"

"You have heard my answer," said Merryweather.

"Take the consequences then," said Somerville, now losing all command over himself, and hurling the decanter across the table at Merryweather. The missile only touched his shoulder, and glancing

off was shivered into a thousand pieces on the ground.

Merryweather rose and said, with as much coolness as he could assume, though the twitching of his upper lip, and the constraint he evidently put upon his voice to prevent it trembling, sufficiently indicated that he was greatly excited, "There is, of course, only one way in which this can be atoned for." He then bowed stiffly to the company, left the tent and ordered his horse to be saddled in order to ride back to Poona.

As he was impatiently waiting for its appearance, one of the officers he had just quitted came up to him, and after expressing his regret at the occurrence which had just taken place, begged Merryweather to allow him to try and effect a reconciliation.

"You can have but one motive," said Merryweather, "in offering to be a mediator, and that a most laudable one, but you must remember that every circumstance connected with this affair

will soon be known throughout the camp, and that any undue haste on my part in settling it, will not only compromise me in the opinion of my brother officers, but cast a reflection on the regiment to which I belong. I shall consult with one of them as to the best course to pursue, and if it be not an amicable one, you may rest assured it will arise from no vindictive feeling on my part, for now that the momentary resentment caused by the act you witnessed has subsided, I would myself, willingly propose to Mr. Somerville, who has been my greatest friend for years, a mutual forgiveness for what has taken place. I think, however, you will allow that I have unfortunately ceased to be a free agent."

The officer who had addressed Merryweather was obliged to admit the justice of this remark, and pressed his services no further. He, however, held out his hand to our hero, as he was about

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to ride off, and after cordially expressing a hope that this unfortunate affair might be satisfactorily arranged, wished him a pleasant ride back to Poona.

It was with far different feelings from those which had attended him on the previous evening that Merryweather now rode over the ground between Yellerly and Poona. A sense of depression weighed upon his spirits, which he in vain endeavoured to shake off. To fight a duel, he felt was inevitable, and had it been with a stranger, after the insult he had received, perhaps he would have felt no great compunction about the matter. But to engage in what might prove to be a deadly strife with one for whom he had entertained the most friendly feeling for years, occasioned him unmitigated pain.

His thoughts therefore were harassing in the extreme, and impatient of their goading influence, he urged his steed forward at a rapid pace, in the vain

hope of escaping by this means from his sensations. But he soon felt that had he even bestrode the winged horse Pegasus, his feelings would have mocked the reputed fleetness of that animal, and as he became aware how idle it was to attempt to escape from the dilemma in which he was placed by such an expedient, he checked the speed of his horse, and allowing him to relapse into a walk, determined to face the enemy he could not evade.

“After all,” he said to himself, “there is no occasion to be so much distressed about it. The past cannot be recalled, and if I am obliged to fight a duel with Somerville I need not fire at him, so that really there is nothing to regret except the repugnance which every one must naturally feel to engage in such an encounter.” This idea had no sooner struck him than he resolved to act upon it, and instantly his mind felt as if lightened of a load. When therefore he

again urged on his horse, it seemed as though some kindly spell had displaced the gloomy fiend which had haunted him; or that his steed, endowed with magic speed had this time distanced his unseen tormentor.

It was late before he arrived at Poona, but notwithstanding this he resolved to visit Lieutenant Pinkem, the officer of his own regiment to whom he had determined to apply for *friendly* assistance should it be necessary to have recourse to hostile measures.

Lieutenant Pinkem had just returned home from mess, and bore certain unequivocal signs of having "dined" very well. "Hurrah!" he shouted, as soon as Merryweather made his appearance. "Come in, and we'll have a night of it—you shall not go home till gun-fire. There's no parade to-morrow morning. But in the first place," he continued, assuming a ludicrously grave countenance, "let us hear of your

delinquencies and give a satisfactory explanation of your absence from mess to-night. Ah, reprobate! Stand off. The *natch*! I've hit it."

"Your conclusions are rather hastily drawn, if I understand you aright," replied Merryweather. "The fact is, that I have been out hunting all day, and have only just returned. But what I have come about is to ask your advice *à propos* to a scrape I have got into."

"And you shall have it with the greatest pleasure, my dear fellow," replied Lieutenant Pinkem, "but first of all we must send for some champagne from the mess, for of all dry things to talk about, what you call a scrape is the driest. Boy!" he shouted at the top of his voice.

"*Sahib!*" replied a man of about fifty years of age, instantly making his appearance.

"Go to the mess and get two bottles of champagne, and look sharp about it."

"Yes sir," replied the native, in almost the only English words he could utter,

disappearing as fast as his legs could carry him.

"Thank Heaven!" continued Lieutenant Pinkem, "I am not acquainted with one word of the language, and what is more, I hope I never shall. I should fancy I was becoming a heathen, and that my face was turning black, if I jabbered Hindustani all day long."

"But you may chance," said Merryweather, "some day to feel the inconvenience of not being able to make yourself understood, besides you get things so much more readily done by being able to explain to the natives what you want, in their own language."

"Quite wrong, Merryweather,—quite wrong, I do assure you,—I know these fellows well, and I'll tell you how I manage them. Although the man you saw just now cannot speak one word of English, yet I make him understand it a great deal better than he does his own

language. For instance, I tell him to get some champagne from the mess. He understands the words 'champagne' and 'mess' well enough, and he knows that my boot-jack has an uncontrollable propensity to fly across the room in the direction of his person if he delays a second. Well, that is all plain English, and since it produces what I want in a far shorter time than the same result could be obtained by the longest explanation in Hindustani, I naturally infer that he comprehends me much better than if I spoke to him in his own language."

"Not a very logical conclusion," said Merryweather, "though certainly your proceedings have the effect of making him extremely expeditious, for here he returns."

"That's right, boy," said Lieutenant Pinkem, in a patronizing tone, to the native, who at this moment reappeared quite out of breath, "I shall increase your wages if you go on in this way.

Put some tumblers on the table. Open the champagne—and go. Now Merryweather help yourself, and let us hear what your scrape is about.”

Merryweather here recapitulated what had taken place at Yellerly, to the whole of which Lieutenant Pinkem listened with a mock seriousness peculiar to the state into which he was verging.

“The only thing I can blame you for,” he said, when the account was finished, “is for being so lenient. You may depend upon it, Merryweather,” he continued, swaying himself backwards and forwards in his chair, and tapping the finger of one hand in the palm of the other, to give more significance to his words, “that if you treat these ‘N I’s’ so indulgently, they will be sure (hic.) to take advantage of it. But how can I assist you? you should have returned the compliment at the time, and with an effective aim. It’s too late to do that now.”

I came with the intention of asking you to call upon Mr. Somerville for an apology if you think the case will admit of one, or for satisfaction. It is impossible to pass over such conduct unnoticed."

"Very proper, — very proper indeed of you to think of that. Yes ; I'm your man. And of course, to prevent all mistakes, I will go provided with the means calculated to uphold the credit of the regiment."

"I give you *carte blanche* to act for me, as you may deem advisable," said Merryweather, misunderstanding his companion, "and if you find it necessary that I should go out, I shall not hesitate to place myself in your hands."

"Go out !" exclaimed Lieutenant Pinkem, who seemed so much taken aback at this view of the question, that he fairly staggered with surprise. "Go out !! Fight a duel with an 'N. I.' Why it will soon scarcely be

worth a man's while to enter her Majesty's service. But if you have really made up your mind to so Quixotic a proceeding, I must see that such an arrangement is made as not to give them any undue advantage over you. Now you know, "continued Lieutenant Pinkem, with a comical increase of gravity, "that a duel ought to be fought upon equal terms. But in the ordinary way of proceeding, an 'N I' would have a decided advantage; because, even if he is killed, he gains far more distinction by meeting his death at the hands of one of her Majesty's officers, than any exploit of his own would entitle him to, though he lived as long as that old fellow Methusalah; whereas it would be just the reverse with you. Therefore, in order to make all fair, you must have two shots to his one. Although, if this sort of thing is to go on, I plainly see we shall have to shoot a quantity of them, before they come to their senses.

"Your opinions on this subject," said Merryweather, laughing in spite of himself, "are I suppose those of Ajax, who you know modestly proclaims,—

'Losing he wins, because his name will be
Ennobled by defeat who durst contend with me.'

But since I am not disposed to consider myself, individually, so surpassing a character, the arrangements you contemplate will not be necessary; and seriously, I assure you that whatever may be the result of your negotiations, I shall not fire at Mr. Somerville."

The volubility with which Lieutenant Pinkem had found himself able to express his views on the case that had been laid before him, had produced a secret satisfaction that was indicated by a bland smile suffusing itself over his features, but it was suddenly arrested by the latter part of Merryweather's observation, and with a vacant stare he exclaimed, "not fire at him?"

Merryweather repeated his determination, at which Lieutenant Pinkem, who could snuff a candle at twelve paces, and who knew that Merryweather was nearly as good a shot as himself, was apparently so overwhelmed, that, possibly with a view of calming his excited feelings, he without further delay quaffed off two tumblers of champagne, and having in his own opinion considerably cleared his intellects by this process, replied, "Why, it is absolute suicide; positively throwing yourself away;"—and as if to illustrate so reckless an action, he threw himself forward with a serio-comic air, in strict keeping with his other proceedings during the evening, but unable to preserve his equilibrium, sunk upon the couch which furnished this part of the bungalow, and after a few unsuccessful efforts to continue the conversation, in a short time fell fast asleep.

Merryweather now rose and after casting a look upon Lieutenant Pinkem that would scarcely have flattered that gentleman had he witnessed it, left the house, and having arrived at his own bungalow, shortly forgot the adventures of the day in a repose, which after the fatigue he had encountered, not even his excited feelings could disturb.

CHAPTER XI.

He left his home with a swelling sail,
Of fame and fortune dreaming,—
With a spirit as free as the vernal gale,
Or the pennon above him streaming.
He hath reach'd his goal ;—by a distant wave,
'Neath a sultry sun they've laid him ;
And stranger forms bent o'er his grave,
When the last sad rites were paid him.

Alaric Watts.

LIEUTENANT Pinkem whom we introduced to our readers in the last chapter under rather unfavourable circumstances,

had many redeeming qualities. He entered the army at a very early age, and soon after that event, carried the colours of his regiment in one of the severest actions in which it was ever engaged. After a short repose he was again ordered upon service, and distinguished himself as an active, enterprising, and intelligent officer. In the "piping time of peace," his restless disposition seemed to chafe from lack of employment. He became a careless, roving, idle character; and his notions of right and wrong, acquired in the battle field and in the camp, it must be confessed, were somewhat ill defined; but he was generous withal, and ever ready to do a kind turn for a friend, though his generosity was not always very nicely graduated to the extent of his means. He was much liked in the regiment, and his bungalow, which was frequently made a place of rendezvous, on the morning after the scene we have described, contained a general assemblage

of his brother officers. Lieutenant Pinkem, consequently, with as much accuracy as his memory would permit, proceeded to recapitulate the communication he had received on the previous evening. A council was thereupon held, and every one having quickly come to the conclusion that it was necessary for Merryweather to "go out" with the "N I," it was agreed *nem. con.* that Pinkem ought without further delay to take the challenge.

Lieutenant Pinkem upon hearing this opinion lost no time in performing his toilet, and having mounted his horse, was soon at the other end of the cantonments, where Somerville resided. He found him at home, and having explained the nature of his visit, briefly stated that the circumstances were of too aggravated a nature to admit of reconciliation. He therefore begged that he might be referred at once to some friend who would be willing to act as his second.

Somerville mentioned the name of one of his brother officers, to whose bungalow Pinkem instantly repaired, and it was then arranged that the duel should be fought that evening.

Pinkem next went to Merryweather, informed him of the "arrangement" that had been made, and that the place agreed upon for the meeting was on some waste ground about a mile from camp, and little frequented either by Europeans or natives. He now again urged upon Merryweather the necessity of firing at the "N I" and though his proposition of the previous night seemed to strike him as rather extravagant, yet he did not fail to lament what he termed the inequality of the contest, now rendered doubly so by Merryweather's infatuated decision.

When all the "arrangements" are made in a matter of this sort, there is little inclination on the part of the principal to enter into conversation, and

although Lieutenant Pinkem, with his usual vivacity, at first chattered away with great ardour, yet perceiving that Merryweather evinced no desire to reply to him, he gradually relapsed into silence. Indeed, men who have so serious a reality before them cannot estrange their thoughts from the painful subject which engrosses their attention, and though by an effort of the mind they may, for a brief space, counterfeit indifference, the deceit is too harassing to admit of any long continuance. It was nearly in silence, therefore, that the day passed away. Merryweather having completed the letters he deemed it necessary to write, took up a book and endeavoured to beguile the time by its perusal, but the unturned page and his motionless eye showed that its contents did not engage his mind. Lieutenant Pinkem on the other hand relieved the monotony of the intermediate hours in a way peculiar to himself. He smoked a cigar in the stables, and gave

gratuitous advice to the *Ghorawallors* in English, who plainly indicated by the expression of their countenances they had no doubt that what "*Sahib*" said well merited their respectful attention, though they did not happen to understand one word that he uttered. Lieutenant Pinkem then had recourse to some soda water, and in the middle of the day took a short nap, which had the effect of making him very hungry, if the "tiffin" he eat upon awaking was any criterion. He afterwards tried a few favourite airs upon the German flute, and indulged in occasional draughts of pale ale and cigars till five in the afternoon, at which time it had been arranged they were to start for the appointed meeting.

Merryweather and Pinkem then ordered their horses, and having consigned to the care of a *Ghorawallor*, who had directions to follow them, a parcel, wrapped up in a manner which would prevent any suspicion of the real

nature of its contents, they mounted, and rode leisurely through the cantonments. As they proceeded Merryweather could not help glancing at the various objects that met his eye, and wishing, what perhaps few men have not under such circumstances failed to wish, that the present hour had passed away, and that he was now looking at the same objects on his *return* from the approaching conflict.

On reaching the ground they saw Somerville and his friend advancing from an opposite direction. Dismounting therefore from their horses, they gave them in charge to the native by whom they were accompanied, and bade him remain with them in a hollow, where the nature of the ground would conceal their operations, and Pinkem, taking the parcel under his arm, they proceeded to the spot before agreed upon.

As they advanced together arm in arm, Pinkem took occasion to dilate upon the

superior nature of the weapons he carried, assuring Merryweather at the same time that they were in excellent order, and that, as he had no intention of wounding his adversary, they might be relied upon to take a button from the "N I's" coat, or to shave a lock of hair from his head, or even to send a bullet through his foraging cap, as a proof at once of his forbearance and his skill; but observing that Merryweather was not paying much attention to his remarks he attributed his silence to despondency, and thought it advisable to rally him.

"There is not much after all," he said, "in standing up to be shot at. You have no idea how accustomed one gets to it in time. Now just assume a careless sort of manner, and if you don't feel inclined to smoke a cigar, atallevants help yourself from my snuff-box when we get close enough to be observed. When we are within hearing too, begin talking on indifferent subjects—where you intend

passing the evening for instance, or any other matter equally unconnected with what you have come about."

"You need not trouble yourself about my behaviour," replied Merryweather, coldly. "I am not aware that I have given you reason to suppose that there is any necessity in my case to have recourse to those blustering expedients which are not unfrequently adopted to conceal a really faint heart."

"Not at all, my dear fellow, not at all. But it has a good appearance—that's all."

"There again I differ from you," replied Merryweather. "I think such proceedings have a very bad appearance. All fantastic tricks are quite out of place on such an occasion, and in my opinion have falsehood stamped upon them, for no man can feel indifferent at a time when he knows that the next minute may be his last. But though I have no intention of swaggering about the ground

in the manner that is sometimes practised, I believe I am a great deal more light hearted at this moment than many would be who so conducted themselves, from the simple fact, that though it is impossible to say what may happen to myself, I run no risk of having the blood of another on my hands, for, as I said before, I mean to fire in the air, and consequently the excellence of your pistols will avail me little."

Pinkem had too much shrewdness and good feeling not to feel the justice of Merryweather's remarks, and from a desire to do his duty towards his friend, had been led to suggest expedients which in his own case he would at once have rejected. Passing over, therefore, what was unanswerable, he confined himself to Merryweather's last observation, and said,—

"That is a point on which you have an undoubted right to exercise your own discretion, though, were it my

case, I certainly should not allow him to go unpunished. But suppose you stop here. This is as good a position as you can have, I think; and the 'N I' can stand near that mound. You will be under no disadvantage with such an arrangement?"

"None at all, that I am aware of," said Merryweather; "this will do very well; and now, the sooner the ground is measured out and the signal given the better."

Pinkem then left Merryweather's side, and after speaking for a few minutes with the adversary's second, returned and informed him that everything was settled,—that the distance was to be twelve paces,—the signal, one—two—three, upon which they were to fire, and that whatever was the result, the contest was then to terminate.

Merryweather merely assenting, Pinkem walked away a few paces, but lingered for a moment. He then

returned to him, and with more earnestness of manner and feeling than he had previously evinced, said, "I have never thought of asking you before, and perhaps the present is not a time to suggest such a possibility, nor is it at all likely; but if an accident should happen, is there anything you would wish done?"

"I have fully contemplated such a possibility," replied Merryweather, "and there are letters addressed to all my friends in my desk. If what you suggest should happen, pray see them forwarded."

"I promise you that, though God knows, Merryweather," said Pinkem, "I hope my services will never be required for such a purpose. But there is no use in thinking of such matters now," he continued, his old associations resuming their influence over him. "It will be all over in a minute, and then we will drink your health at mess to night."

The ground was now measured by the two seconds, and then Merryweather and Somerville between whom since their childhood the most undivided friendship had existed until this unhappy quarrel occurred—who at that moment would willingly have cast down the deadly weapons with which they were armed, and have become reconciliated—these men were obliged to threaten each other's lives, not because they wished it, but to comply with the usages of society, and to satisfy the scruples of those who were utterly indifferent as to the result of the contest.

The seconds now retired a few paces, and Pinkem having then asked the combatants whether they were ready, to which he received an affirmative reply, gave the signal one—two—three! Scarcely had the last word left the mouth of Pinkem when Merryweather's pistol exploded. He had intended, as he had before said, to fire in the air,

but upon raising his pistol, the hair trigger, with which he was ignorant it was provided, was accidentally brushed against the skirt of his coat. The ball sped upon its deadly errand, and Somerville, pierced through the breast, fell backwards to the earth.

“Heavenly mercy!” exclaimed Merryweather, completely bewildered, “what have I done?” He first gazed vacantly upon the pistol he still grasped, then at the form which his own hand had laid prostrate. Suddenly he threw the weapon from him, darted across the intervening space, and throwing himself by the side of his dying friend, propped up his head, tore open his clothes and endeavoured to stop the stream of life that was fast flowing from his wound.

The manifest fruitlessness of his attempts almost bereft him of reason. With the wildness of a maniac he begged the man whose stay in this world, was at

the furthest limited to a few minutes, to say that he was not hurt, bewailing in the same breath that he could not purchase Somerville's life with his own.

"I am beyond any help that you can give me," said Somerville, in a faint tone. "Tell them at home"—he paused at the associations that this word conjured up, but continued, "yes—at home—that I thought of them in my last moments, and that my dying conviction is, that you were as innocent of any intention to cause my death, as I was to cause yours."

His voice had sunk lower and lower, till the last words were scarcely louder than a whisper, but still they were heard by the whole party, who had now come up, and were kneeling on the ground by his side.

He remained motionless for a minute, and then his lips again moved, but no sound proceeded from them, and he could only gently press Merryweather's hand. For an instant a smile hovered on the

countenance on which death was rapidly stamping his indelible marks, and then the jaw sunk, the eye glazed, and Merryweather's arms held but the corpse of his once generous, noble-hearted friend.

Merryweather could scarcely believe the evidence of his own senses. The whole scene appeared like some frightful dream, and he still continued, when life was extinct, to gaze upon the inanimate countenance of Somerville. Pinkem endeavoured to rouse him from the stupor into which he had fallen, and raising him from the ground, conjured him to mount his horse and proceed to Bombay, and if possible to embark for England, assuring him that in his absence he would vindicate his character, and explain the facts as they occurred.

As he spoke, a mounted patrol was seen galloping towards them, for it had reached the ears of the Commander-

in-Chief that a duel was to be fought. Had the troopers arrived ten minutes sooner the duel would never have taken place. Upon such trivial things does the destiny of man depend! and strange to say, the wounded feelings of the most susceptible man of honour would have been quite as much appeased by the readiness the parties evinced to give "satisfaction," as if the most desperate conflict had taken place.

The patrol now rapidly approached, but Merryweather remained immoveable. Assisted by Pinkem on his horse, his hands seized the reins, but he made no effort to escape. More than once while he held Somerville in his arms he had eyed the loaded pistol that had fallen by his friend's side, when the fatal shot arrested the hand that was about to discharge its contents in the air, and it is probable, that had he remained longer on the ground, his insupportable agony would have sought relief in the last desperate

act a man can have recourse to; but with his wild gaze fixed on vacancy, he now seemed unconscious of what was passing around him.

Scarcely had he been thus mounted when the guard reached the ground. The officer in command, after a glance at the group, instantly ordered his men to seize Merryweather. They galloped forward to obey, but only one got sufficiently near to reach him. It was fortunate that this attempt to capture him was made, for roused to action by the rude grasp of the soldier, his thoughts were for the moment diverted from the dreadful scene in which he had taken so prominent a part, and setting spurs to his horse, the man who had leant forward to obey his officer's commands was dragged from his saddle and fell to the ground.

Instinctively he again dashed his spurs into the flanks of "Phantom," who, indignant at such unwonted treatment,

bounded high in the air, and sprang forward at a rate that soon doubled the intervening space between him and his pursuers. Merryweather then checked the ardour of his horse, but took care to preserve the distance that he had already obtained. For miles thus they rode, the pursuers alternately gaining and losing ground as Merryweather pulled or slackened the reign of his willing steed. The pace however at which they were proceeding could not be kept up for any length of time by the pursuers. Their horses began to show evident symptoms of distress, and, reeking with foam, they lost ground at every stride. The men, therefore, seeing the fruitlessness of their efforts, reined in, and gave up the chase. "Phantom," on the other hand, had not yet turned a hair, and the proud way in which he bore himself shewed that what had beaten the horses of the pursuers was but just sufficient thoroughly to rouse the spirit of the steed of the

desert. When the bit occasionally checked his progress, he would champ and chafe under its control, while, with dilated eye, expanded nostril, erect carriage of the head, and a spirited action that fully displayed his fine proportions; he was a picture that canvass could not have successfully portrayed, though Verné himself had been the artist.

But a more formidable impediment than his pursuers now threatened to arrest the progress of Merryweather. It was near the middle of June, the time for the setting in of the monsoon. For days previously heavy looking clouds tossed to and fro by the contending blasts, had, with their menacing folds, at times usurped every part of the heavens. As they were driven forward or repulsed by the powerful antagonists which were struggling for supremacy, they were at times lost sight of beneath the horizon, but only till the conquered

foe, gathering fresh strength, again spread them over the space from which they had lately been driven. These well known signs, the muttering of distant thunder, the heavy drops of rain that occasionally fell, and at night the lightning's vivid flash, all betokened the speedy advent of the Elephanta, the storm that invariably ushers in the periodical wind, which for four months in the year deluges the heated soil with rain.

Symptoms of its immediate approach now manifested themselves. The wind, descending from the upper regions, began to blow in fitful gusts along the surface of the earth, forcing in its progress masses of dust before it, so dense as completely to shroud from view even the nearest objects. This annoyance was at last removed by torrents of hail and rain, but with such force were they urged by the furious storm, that Merryweather was

compelled to turn his horse in the opposite direction to that from which they were driven.

In the mean time night set in, and then darkness rapidly spread around. It was in truth "a darkness that might be felt." Nothing but the most intense blackness prevailed on all sides. Not a particle of light in any direction presented itself on which to fix the eye. Not a star glimmered, but still the wind rising higher and higher continued its impetuous course. Still the clouds shot forth their deluging streams. Suddenly the whole scene was illumined by one of those brilliant flashes of lightning that are only seen in the tropics. The electric fluid passed close by Merryweather, and striking a tree at a short distance from the road side, rent its bulky form in twain. The crashing report that followed had not died away, before the lightning again darted forth on some destructive errand, and reverberating peals of

thunder swiftly succeeded each other. But trifling to Merryweather was the warring of the elements as compared to the tempest that raged within his own breast. It seemed to him as if the vengeance of heaven tracked the flying footsteps of the murderer. The dying countenance of Somerville, with its resigned expression, was ever present before him, and the last noble words he had uttered sounded in endless repetition in his ears. Remorse with cruel and invincible power now seized his mind, and despair nearly hurled it from its tottering seat. From this maddening conflict of feeling, he again sought refuge in action, and turning his horse's head, once more faced the storm. He rode onwards at the peril of his life, for he had wandered from the road, and was now ascending one of the ranges of ghauts that traverse this part of India. A false step would in many places be certain death. But what recked he of danger? What object had

he in preserving himself from a death that would at once relieve him from the torture of self condemnation? As this occurred to him, the enemy of mankind, ever near to encourage us in evil, blew the spark thus kindled till Merryweather eagerly hoped for the relief which had at first only indistinctly suggested itself to his mind. On, on, he then spurred, and at every stride impiously wished that his horse's hoofs might spring into void space, and hurl him into eternity. Providence, however, decreed otherwise, and he pursued his dangerous course unhurt, though at times he passed so close to the mountain torrent that leapt with resistless force into the depths below, that showers of spray were blown over him by the wind, and though the next day the prints of his horse's feet were traced on the edge of the deepest precipices.

He had nearly traversed the ghauts when the storm began sensibly to abate,

and though the rain still continued to descend in undiminished quantity, it was driven with less force. The moon, too, which had risen, now dispelled the intense darkness which had hitherto prevailed, and shortly afterwards making her appearance through some broken clouds, shed a pale light over the dripping prospect, and enabled 'Phantom' with the instinctive quickness for which his race is so celebrated, to regain the high road.

As Merryweather became aware of this, and of the comparative safety in which he now travelled; as he became sensible that he had been protected not only against inevitable dangers, but against those which he had madly and impiously sought, better and calmer thoughts took possession of his mind. It may have been that the obstacles he had surmounted, and his miraculous escape from the perils that had beset his path, led him to hope that the feelings

which now raged in his breast might be controlled and subdued. It may have been that the consciousness of owing his escape from destruction to the almost visible interposition of Providence, suggested to him the duty of bearing his present sufferings with more humility and patience. But to whatever cause it might be traced, reaction began to take place in his mind, hope again asserted her empire, and his thoughts slowly reverted to those channels which were the best safeguard against the desperate act he had so nearly committed. He pictured to himself the beautiful countenance of his cousin, wondered whether she would believe him capable of having purposely caused the death of Somerville, and then again as his avowed intentions recurred to him, and his conscience acquitted him of all design against his friend's life, he thought her blue eyes looked reproachfully though kindly upon him.

But the terrible excitement under which he had laboured, and the hours he had passed in his saddle began to tell upon him. He became faint with exhaustion and fatigue. His brow throbbed with incipient fever, and his whole frame shook as with the palsy. Dreading in this extremity that he would be unable to reach Bombay, he again pressed his horse forward, now jaded with the distance he had come, and stiff with wet and cold. But "Phantom" soon mended his pace, and as his blood warmed and circulated more freely through his veins, his breeding again shewed itself, and gallantly he resumed his devotion to the service of his master.

The ghauts were soon left behind, but every mile that Merryweather now advanced found him less and less capable of sustaining further fatigue, and at last unable to hold himself upright, he twisted his hands in his horse's mane and leant forward for support on his

neck till he reached a village where there was a government bungalow.

Riding up to the door he succeeded, after some trouble, in awaking a man who was sleeping within, and making him understand that he wanted some brandy. After an incessant talking of several minutes duration with some people inside, all of whom lighted lanterns and torches, and moved about in every direction but the right one, a bottle of brandy was brought to him. First mixing some of it with water, he poured it down his horse's throat, and then endeavoured to recruit his own failing strength.

Though the fiery liquid increased the malady that was every minute making such rapid strides, yet it gave him temporary relief, and, remounting his horse, also refreshed by the stimulating draught it had swallowed, he prepared to resume his journey. He was now quickly reminded that he had omitted

to pay for his entertainment by a native taking hold of his horse's rein, and rather peremptorily demanding the required sum. Merryweather was still in so nervous and excited a state, that he instantly supposed this was some attempt to capture him, and he immediately put spurs to his horse. But the man, sure of the assistance of his companions, kept hold of the rein, and succeeded in backing the horse till Merryweather was thrust against the low thatch of the bungalow. On any other occasion it is possible that he would have had recourse to measures not quite agreeable to his assailant's feelings, but as he now understood, from the oft repeated word of "pice" the cause of his proceedings, he instantly expressed his willingness to accede to the demand. It is not however the practice of residents in India to carry money about with them. Each individual is well known, and the demands for ordinary expenditure are

provided for in another way. Merryweather therefore was devoid of the necessary "pice," but taking his watch from his pocket, offered that, and was thereupon allowed to proceed without further molestation.

The native eyed the handsome gold watch of which he had so unexpectedly become possessed for some minutes, pondering at the same time over the probable circumstances under which it had come into his possession. He then carried it to a box in which all his worldly wealth was deposited, placed it therein with the greatest care and secrecy, extracted from the same receptacle two rupees, and having closed and locked his stronghold, sauntered back to his comrades, handed the money to the "Messman," and talked incessantly till morning, over the remainder of the brandy that had been so extravagantly paid for, of the great prowess he had displayed in obliging the "sahib" to pay

the two rupees they had seen him produce.

Merryweather, ignorant, and heedless if he had not been so, of the fate of the watch he had thus been obliged to surrender, continued his journey. He now made every effort to reach Panwell before the strength given him by the cordial he had taken should go off, and leave him, as he was aware would be the case, in a greater state of prostration than before. Ten long miles were still before him, but at last the distance was accomplished,—the long dirty village of Panwell was reached, and both horse and rider, in a deplorable condition, stopped at the door of the bungalow, of which a description has been given in a previous chapter.

Merryweather managed to dismount, and to relieve his horse of the saddle and bridle, and as soon as he could obtain assistance ordered him to be properly attended to. It was useless.

Just as the man advanced to obey the order, a dull sound as of a heavy weight falling was heard, a few groans followed, and all was again still. "Phantom," had expired.

John, the monkey faced servant, proved himself a valuable acquaintance on this occasion, for after finding that all his arguments to persuade Merryweather to remain in the bungalow were fruitless, he assisted him down to the place of embarkation for Bombay, and procured him a canoe just large enough to hold two men, and which from its size could be propelled at a great rate. John, after seating him in this and propping him up in the best way he could, bade him good-bye, and thrust the light craft from the landing steps.

At every stroke of the paddles the canoe shot swiftly ahead. The swamps that had before struck Merryweather as so loathsome were rapidly passed,

and after two or three hours of unrelaxed exertion on the part of the rower, the lights of Bombay became distinctly visible. As they neared the shore, the diminutive boat, skimming over the water on her rapid course, shot through the congregated shipping, which in the deceptive light afforded partly by the moon and partly by the breaking day, looked like huge monsters at rest.

But Merryweather, was far too ill to notice what passed around him. He knew not even where he was, or what time had elapsed since he left Panwell, having been insensible the greater part of the time; and now that the boat stopped at the wharf, and he was informed that he had arrived at Bombay he found himself unable to rise from his recumbent position, and after being assisted into a palanquin, could with difficulty tell the bearers to take him to his uncle's house, whither he arrived as that gentleman was about to

mount his horse and proceed on his morning's ride.

Pity soon took the place of surprise with Mr. Ponsonby, when he perceived the condition of his nephew. His faded eye, hollow cheek, and ghastly countenance already marked but too distinctly the ravages of the disease that had fastened upon him. He instantly therefore had him conveyed within and placed on a bed—a bed that for many weary weeks was to be the scene of his sufferings.

CHAPTER XII

With that methought a legion of foul fiends,
Environ'd me and howled in mine ears,
Such hideous cries, that with the very noise,
I, trembling, wak'd, and for a season after
Could not believe but that I was in hell!
Such terrible impression made my dream.

Shakspeare.

GREAT was the excitement that prevailed
amongst the military circles at Poona,
when the disastrous result of the duel

became known. A court of enquiry met the next day, but the evidence of the seconds, and particularly of Pinkem, was decisive, and the court pronounced an unanimous opinion, establishing the accidental nature of the unhappy event which had just taken place. The Commander-in-Chief also expressed himself satisfied with the verdict, upon the proceedings being forwarded to him.

Merryweather, therefore, had nothing to fear from this source as he had at first gloomily apprehended, but the knowledge that he was not obnoxious to official blame in no degree mitigated the feelings of remorse which in his lucid intervals pressed upon his mind.

In his uncle's house he remained unmolested, a surgeon having certified that he could not be removed without fatal consequences. A further inquiry was therefore instituted, occasioned by his absence from regimental duty, and a general order was afterwards issued,

entirely exculpating him on this ground also. The affair consequently blew over, and had ceased even to be a subject of conversation, long before Merryweather had risen from his bed of pain.

For four weeks the fever maintained its undivided power over his prostrate frame, defying the skill of his physician, and reducing his strength to so low an ebb, that death appeared not unlikely to ensue from mere exhaustion. During this period Merryweather's sufferings were unremitting, for even when sleep at long intervals visited him, it brought no respite with it.

At one time during his restless slumbers his heated imagination placed him amidst a vast multitude, by whom, with ignominious gibes, he was being led to the scaffold. His limbs were bound so tight that the cords in some places pierced to the bones. The halter which was to end his existence was placed around his neck. The cap was drawn

over his face. The bolt which supported him was withdrawn. He fell heavily—and at the same moment awoke from his imaginary sufferings, only to experience the reality of pain, which the merciless fever inflicted upon him.

He then fancied himself in the streets of a large town, where the wildest confusion and riot reigned. The air appeared to teem with offensive sounds, and at every step horrible sights met his unwilling eye. Oaths and coarse jokes, and hoarse discordant laughter struck his ear on the one side,—shrieks of murder and piteous cries for help on the other. A fountain that was playing near him was throwing up *blood* instead of water. Blood too was flowing in profusion along the streets. Blood was written in large crimson letters on the houses. Suddenly, as he remained in speechless horror regarding this scene, a man came up and accused him of murder, then another and

another, till at last he was surrounded by a raving mob with yelling and angry voices, pouring forth accusations against him. "Kill him!" cried one, and instantly a hundred voices cried "Kill him!" He saw an opening in the crowd and darted through it. The whole multitude were instantly in pursuit. The foremost gained on him. Their footsteps sounded nearer and nearer. He was felled to the ground, buffeted and stabbed, and seemed to breath his last amidst the triumphant shouts of his persecutors.

Again he awoke, and shuddered as he reviewed the whole scene, the minutest particulars of which were so vividly impressed upon his mind, that for many minutes he doubted if they had only existed in his imagination. For hours after this he lay awake, not daring again to trust himself to the caprice of a disordered imagination, unrestrained by reason; but at last sleep again asserted her dominion.

His truant fancy now carried him to a vast desert, where at every step he sank into the loose sand, and the air, radiant with the reflected heat of a vertical sun, played against his face like the exhalation of some immense furnace. He had toiled onwards for half the day, but as far as the eye could reach, interminable mounds of sand were the only objects it encountered. Wearily he still struggled on to a hill in front, higher than any he had yet ascended, and the hope of seeing some termination to the frightful scene of desolation which surrounded him encouraged him to persevere. With renewed energy therefore he climbed up its burning side. But the disappointment he experienced when the same dreary sight met his gaze, was too much to bear. His fortitude forsook him, and sinking down he fervently prayed that death might speedily bring him relief. At that moment a light shadow flitted across the

place where he sat, and a voice familiar to his ear said—"Take courage. Trust in the Providence that protected you during the midnight storm on the ghauts."

"Constance !"

"Nay, speak not. Ask me nought ; but believe that your sufferings shall soon be over."

So saying, she took his hand. The earth seemed no longer to attract him. He had merely to wish to move and he moved without an effort, without even touching with his feet the burning surface through which he had toiled with so much difficulty. Rapidly they now fled through space. At length from an acclivity he perceived green meadows and meandering streams, and beautiful groves of trees covered with luxuriant foliage. The streams seemed to bathe their feet in their onward flight. A cool and refreshing breeze, bearing on its wings the perfume of violets, and the

songs of many birds was then wafted by. A few moments more elapsed, and the hand that had clasped his own presented to his parched lips a cup, wreathed with flowers, and brimming over with the purest water.

"Constance!" exclaimed Merryweather, "that I had the power of adequately expressing my gratitude!"

"Promise," was the reply, "that the love you once said you bore me shall ever remain undiminished."

"Can love of mine ever repay such acts as these?" Merryweather was about to say, but at this instant he awoke, and found that during a sleep of several hours duration the crisis of his disorder had passed, and the fever had nearly left him. "I do promise, though," he continued, still thinking of what he was about to say in his dream, "always to love her, and if ever hereafter even a momentary unkind thought of her should arise in my

breast, the remembrance of this dream shall that instant crush it."

Although Merryweather was now pronounced free from danger, many days yet elapsed before he could arise from his bed, and when he was at last able to do so, he found that he was but the shadow of his former self. His mind had also suffered. If he attempted to peruse a book, the meaning of the words eluded his grasp, and a settled melancholy seemed to fall upon his spirits. All his ideas and wishes now centred in one object—to leave India, a place connected with such unhappy associations, and his uncle who viewed these symptoms with the greatest alarm, recommended him to travel for a few months on the continent of Europe, and at once to make the necessary application for leave of absence. So urgent did this step appear, that Mr. Ponsonby would not even wait for the return of Bargee Gopall, who had volun-

tarily started alone for the spot where he represented the box of papers to be concealed; but having made his own arrangements, left, with his nephew, by the next mail for Suez. Previous to doing so, however, he entrusted the whole secret to a friend, who willingly consented to use every effort to obtain possession of the valuable documents.

Mr. Ponsonby was glad to perceive that the sea air effected a slight change for the better in Merryweather. He was unremitting in his exertions to rally him, and seized every opportunity to divert his thoughts from the subject to which they were chained. Nor were these kind efforts totally unsuccessful, and once he even produced a smile on his countenance by pointing out to him amongst the passengers the *ci-devant* Miss Flirtree, who had at last become a bride. She had been married a month, and had already insisted upon being sent home by her amiable spouse to recruit her health in

the "green fields of dear—dear England."

Having crossed the desert and descended the Nile, Mr. Ponsonby determined to embark at Alexandria for Malta, and commence his plan of travelling on the continent of Europe by proceeding at once to Naples. This he found no difficulty in accomplishing, and after spending a sufficient time at the latter place, to render them as familiar with its glorious scenery as our readers doubtless are, either from actual experience, or from descriptions or paintings, which leave nothing for experience to supply, they passed a month at Rome and Florence, and, crossing the Appenines, proceeded to Venice. Merryweather was naturally keenly alive to the attractions which these places afforded, and it had been one of his favourite plans to make such a tour as he was now engaged in. But neither Rome, nor the Pitti Palace, nor the Florentine Gallery, nor

Venice, as rich in the noble works of its artists as in its historical traditions, could dispel the confirmed melancholy that had settled upon him. Mr. Ponsonby perceiving this, and that his young spirit had received a wound which time alone could heal, proceeded by slow stages through the Tyrol to Munich, and from thence to Frankfort and down the Rhine to England, whither they arrived in the early part of spring, nearly a year having elapsed since their departure from India.

END OF VOL. I.

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